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Echo, Winter/Spring 2010

Columbia College Chicago

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WINTER • SPRING

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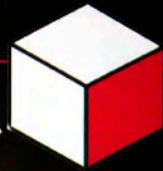
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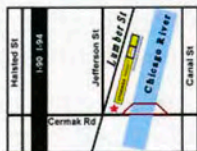
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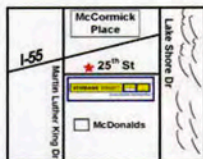
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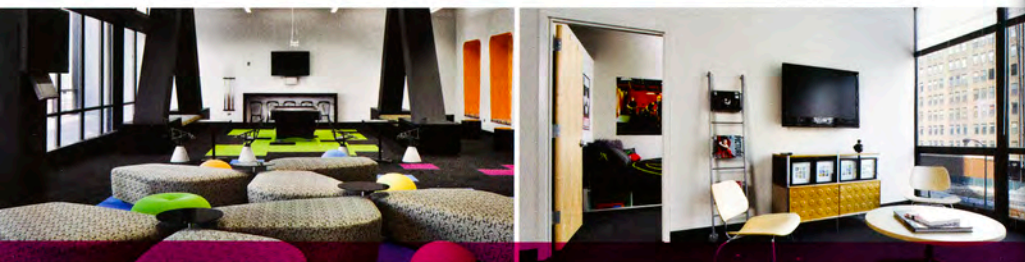


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in(10)city

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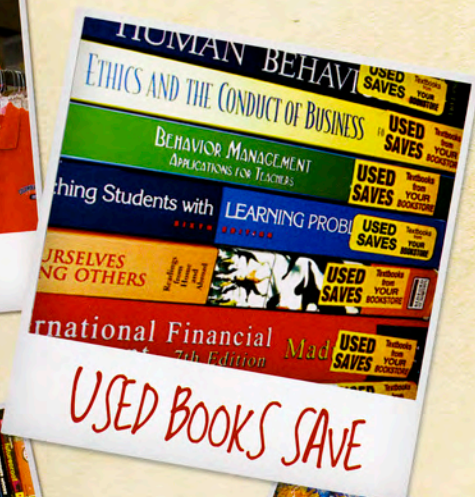
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45 The Un-restaurant

With off-the-books locations and off-the-charts flavors, underground dinner parties are more popular than ever. *By Joseph Hernandez*

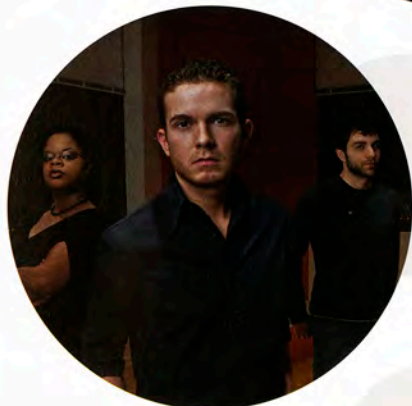


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Better late than never; as of 2009, women of color are finally Disney princesses. *By Ebony Haynes*



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WTF? Chicago police officers who hunt ghosts on TV? Believe it. *By Thomas Pardee*



**ELTON JOHN'S NEW MUSICAL IS
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COLLEGE IS ALL about making transitions, aspiring to new goals and working toward the best possible future.

Each semester a new Echo staff re-imagines what the magazine can and should do for its readers. This semester, our staff of 11 decided that Echo should feature stories from the post-graduate front lines, where life is anything but simple. We wanted our readers to see Echo not just as a reflection of where they are today but a forecast of where they'll be tomorrow. And let's face it, we're all thinking about tomorrow.

It isn't always a bright forecast, especially for students headed into creative fields, and it's easy to view their struggles as simply paying their dues. That, however, overlooks the precarious times in which we live—when no one knows if lost jobs are ever coming back, and support of the arts is secondary to keeping the economy afloat. This is the context in which our cover story explores the uncertain period between graduation and (hopefully) employment. It's a gray period when young artists must make big decisions: whether or not they should keep pushing themselves and their art, and just how much they're willing to sacrifice in its pursuit.

We wanted to clear up the confusion surrounding the less glamorous aspects of striking out—like finding your own health insurance or saving for your first real estate purchase—while also highlighting the fun stuff, like adopting a new pet or furnishing your apartment on the cheap.

Our features aim to take well-known elements of Chicago culture—like its world-class dining scene and its inglorious gangster past—and shed light on more mysterious elements, like the open secret of the city's underground dinner parties, or the soon-to-be-famous Chicago Paranormal Detectives. We've crammed our In(10)City section (formerly "IntenseCity", but renamed for our calendar year) with stories celebrating the characters and settings contributing to Chicago's incredible diversity. And don't miss Echo's amped up fashion coverage, which focuses on homegrown talent in Chicago's ever-burgeoning fashion scene.

We've challenged ourselves to bring readers the most interesting, thoughtful and hyper-relevant content we can. Now it's your turn.

Enjoy.

**Joseph Hernandez &
Thomas Pardee**

ON THE COVER:

Model: John Lendman

Photo: Cooper Link

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ECHO MAGAZINE STAFF

Winter • Spring 2010

Photo by Cooper Link

THE ARTIST'S STUDIO AS MEMORY.

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Tacita Dean. Still from *Section Cinema* (*Homage to Marcel Broodthaers*), 2002. Color 16 mm film with optical sound. 13 minute continuous loop. Courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery, New York



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in(10)city

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Photo by Cooper Link

WARMING UP

By Travis Truitt and Tanya King
Photos by Anthony King

These five Chicago show-starters—born in local garages—are now on national radar.

The Pet Lions perform at Schubas.



PET LIONS

Seen and heard performing at Summerfest and at Chicago venues like Schubas and Metro
Check out "Roman History" and their five-song EP *Soft Right*

The Pet Lions have drawn comparisons to the Strokes, Weezer and even the Beach Boys. This four-piece indie rock band consists of Karl Ostby on guitars and vocals, Shuhei Yamamoto on bass, Matt Dahl on drums and Tom Owens on guitars and keyboards. Ostby says the Pet Lions draw on '60s pop for inspiration. "We focus on writing good melodies and instrumentation first." The Lions' infectious songs have impressed local critics and talent buyers alike. "Roman History" from the group's debut EP *Soft Right* is the best of the bunch, with Ostby's rapid-fire lyrics exploring getting over lost love.

The band is currently in discussions for a record deal and can be seen performing throughout the Midwest. *Soft Right* is available for free download on the band's website, petlions.com.

MYSPACE.COM/PETLIONSMUSIC

HEY CHAMP

Seen and heard performing at Lollapalooza 2009 and touring with Lupe Fiasco in 2008
Check out "Cold Dust Girl," "Beatbox Remix" and "Neverest"

Rock, pop, electronica and '80s techno define Hey Champ, a group that hails from Rockford, Ill. "We aspire to be as cool as Blossom and Cheap Trick," says drummer Jon Marks, noting two Rockford bands that have hit it big. Marks is joined by his co-founder Saam Hagshenas on vocals and guitar and synth player Pete Dougherty.

The band's first break came when rapper and hip-hop producer Lupe Fiasco saw the video for "Cold Dust Girl," a perfect song for an after party with its melodic strings and cool vocals. He immediately invited Hey Champ to open for his nationwide tour. Despite their use of electronic music, they want to give audiences a rock experience. "I want eardrums to bleed a bit!" says Dougherty. "We didn't just want to sit behind some turntables or a mixer," adds Hagshenas.

MYSPACE.COM/HEYCHAMP

**"We want
earsdrums
to bleed a bit!"**

**-Pete Dougherty,
Hey Champ**



The Pet Lions rock out on stage

THE HANDCUFFS

Seen and heard on *Gossip Girl*,
The Hills and venues
throughout Chicago

Check out "Love Me All the Way," "Sex
and Violins" and "Can't Get the Girl"

The Handcuffs' alternative/indie sound boasts the pounding swagger of drummer Brad Elvis and the sweet, powerfully seductive vocals of Chloe F. Orwell. This is best demonstrated in "Sex and Violins" from the Handcuffs' debut album *Model for a Revolution*, which features a swirling, psychedelic fade-out that simply dazzles. Add explosive live sets and costumes that recall swinging '60s London, and you have a hit.

The chemistry between Elvis and Orwell isn't just musical—the two are a couple in real life. They're quick to credit each other for the band's distinct sound and success. "[Elvis] really is a drummer who contributes melody and hook," Orwell says. "Some drummers are just beat-keepers, but our songs have drum hooks and drum melodies. It helps make the music memorable and hummable."

[MYSACE.COM/THEHANDCUFFS](http://myspace.com/thehandcuffs)

COMPANY OF THIEVES

Seen and heard on WXRT, NBC's
Last Call with Carson Daly and
a national tour with alternative
rock group Our Lady Peace

Check out "Oscar Wilde," "Pressure"
and their videos on YouTube

Company of Thieves' guitar-driven alternative rock sound and poetic lyrics have a distinctively emo feel. Their album *Ordinary Riches* is filled with screaming guitar solos from Marc Walloch but also includes rich melodies, soft strings and vocals by lead singer Genevieve Schatz. Drummer Mike Ortiz, keyboardist Mike Miamone and bassist Bob Buckstaff round out the ensemble.

Company of Thieves' influences aren't limited to just musicians—Schatz says the band is also inspired by Irish playwright Oscar Wilde, the subject of one of their songs. *Ordinary Riches* is as much a sonic experiment as it is a statement. "There is a lot of raw energy," Schatz says about their performances. "We're making a lot of discoveries on stage and bringing new life to the music each time."

[MYSACE.COM/COMPANYOFTHIEVES](http://myspace.com/companyofthieves)

ORI KAWA

Seen and heard at house club
Smart Bar, *Lava Lounge*,
LovEvolution and *Winter
Music Conference 2009*

Check out "Back Home"

"Chubby-ass house"—that's how DJ and promoter Ori Kawa describes his delightful, down-tempo and groovy style of house music on his MySpace page. "It's funky, slower but people can still dance to it if they want to," says Kawa.

Once he arrived in Chicago, the 26-year-old from San Francisco hit the ground running, making his mark on the house and electronic scenes. During the three years he's been here, he's played to sold-out crowds for artists such as Mark Farina, Derrick Carter and Green Velvet. "Back Home," a recent track, is representative of his style: smooth and slow enough to tap your foot to but bouncy enough for dancing. He's been working more on producing music, making his own tracks with vocals that he plans to release early this year.

[MYSACE.COM/MR_WACKS](http://myspace.com/mr_wacks)

5. Gangsta's Paradise - Coolio

4. Hey Jude - The Beatles

3. Billie Jean - Michael Jackson

2. Don't Stop Believing - Journey

1. Bye, Bye, Bye - 'N Sync

by ECHO staff

GETTING STUDIOUS

Chicago native Marcos "Kosine" Palacios, rising music super-producer, has the formula for hip-hop success.

By Ebony Haynes

IT'S EARLY, BUT Marcos "Kosine" Palacios looks alert and focused—even via Skype.

"Can you see me now?" The 26-year-old producer/songwriter checks to make sure his webcam is working properly. It is. From the bedroom of his Los Angeles condo, Palacios, wearing a white tee and black leather jacket, is squeezing this interview in between e-mail responses, studio bookings and preparations for an upcoming trip to Holland. He has to—he's a busy guy, and that's how he likes it.

"I'm sleepy, but it's cool," Kosine says. "I'm just happy to be here."

After graduating from Columbia College Chicago in 2006, Palacios has had a remarkably vertical career trajectory. He taught a music production course at Columbia for two years and then joined forces with friend Ernest "Tuo" Clark to create their own music production and management company called Da Internz, which they branded with their own creative mantra, "Write Ya Life." The duo moved to Los Angeles in 2007, and Palacios went quickly from networking and mixing for local acts to producing for big-label artists like Robin Thicke, MIMS and Letoya Luckett of Destiny's Child fame.

Clark says Palacios' innate understanding of music—not to mention an eccentric personality and a distinct sound—has thrust him headfirst into the game. "He thinks about each individual instrument, puts them together and makes it all speak as a whole," Clark writes in an e-mail. "The way he



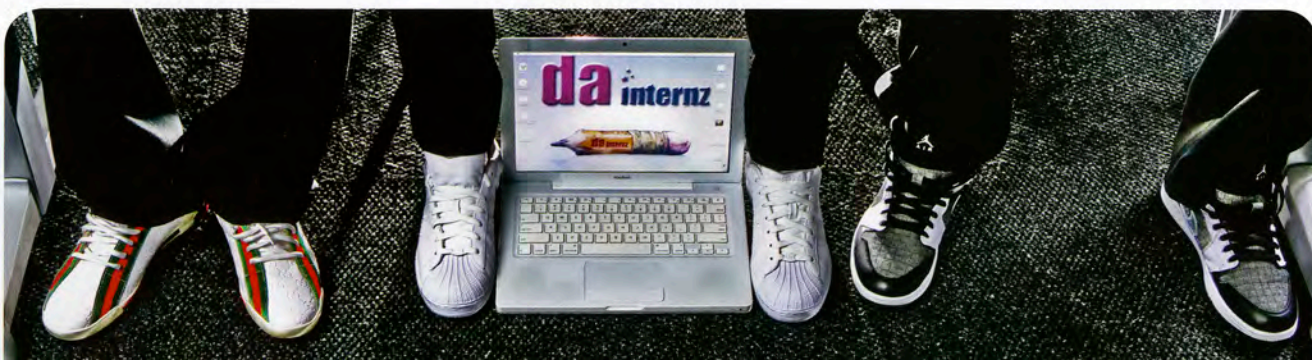
reacts to the music in the studio is really weird. Sometimes no one really understands what he's doing but him." Palacios has recently worked with new artist Mishon on his R&B/Pop single "Just a Kiss." He produced the club banger "Move (If You Wanna)" by MIMS and the synth dance remix "She Ain't Got..." off Luckett's sophomore solo album *Lady Love*. He also served as co-executive producer on MIMS' latest album *Guilt* and recently worked with up-and-coming artists Katrina Graham and Kayla Smith. Da Internz was also nominated for 2009 Record Producer of the Year by the Chicago Music Awards.

It's no wonder Palacios is so sought after. Clark calls his drum work "crazy"—his sleek, electro-R&B style is bold, bassy and radio-friendly, regardless of the tempo. Sometimes it's soulful and seductive; other times it's dirty and hardcore uptempo.

Palacios—who plays piano, drums and saxophone—says treating artists "as if they were Jay-Z or Alicia Keys" is essential: "You can't be scared when you go in the studio. Most producers are above working with new artists because of their egos...[with 'Da Internz, there's] no ego stuff. We're humble, having a good time and living our dream."

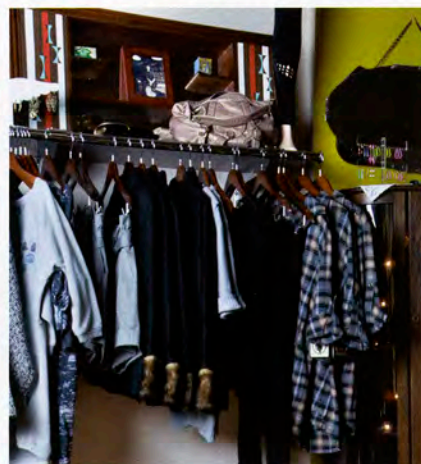
His quick success proves he's got the talent to get in the game, but even Palacios knows it will take a lot more to stay there.

"[Da Internz] believe God has given us the tools, but it's up to us how we use them," he says. "'Writing your life' is [about] creating your own destiny." ...



Photos courtesy of Da Internz

THE STYLE SETTER

By Joseph Hernandez
Photo by Cooper Link*Windy Citizen Monica Dimperio's blog explores Midwest fashion philosophy.*

A FASHION MECCA Chicago is not—and if it were up to fashion blogger Monica Dimperio, it would stay that way. “New York and L.A. start the trends, but it’s Chicagoans who are absolutely willing to try anything,” says Dimperio, clad in a simple black V-neck t-shirt, black skinny jeans and copper-chained necklace.

From Wicker Park to the Gold Coast, the 27-year-old Dimperio and her camera capture Windy City denizens at their chicest—when they are themselves. Every day, Dimperio updates her blogs, *The MidWasteland* and *Wear Windy City*, with photos of style setters—the artists, students and young professionals she feels represent her readers.

While *Wear Windy City* focuses on details of an outfit like cocktail rings, nail polish and pleats on a dress, *MidWasteland* is a fashion ode to the entire Midwest. Since launching her blog in 2007 during that summer’s Pitchfork Music Festival, Dimperio has expanded her coverage through tours of Minneapolis, St. Louis and Lawrence, Kan. These tours “give me a sense of

what styles and trends are working and taking hold,” says Dimperio. Her on-the-road posts show the versatility and practicality of Midwest style from the spectrum of plaids and DayGlo to skinny jeans and boots.

“It is high-low, a little vintage mixed with fast fashion...”

-Monica Dimperio

Compared to Los Angeles and New York, “Chicago is not a high-end city. It is high-low, a little vintage mixed with fast fashion—H+M, Forever21,” she observes. “Midwesterners are real people. Style based on labels does not translate to this city.”

Mainstreaming can occur quickly, she finds. “Plaids and neon have become normal. It’s no longer strictly a subculture thing,” says Dimperio. What’s more, pop culture influences are ushering in a new formality. “Everyone wants to

be Don Draper, Betty Draper [of AMC’s ‘60s-era hit *Mad Men*]. People are going vintage because it’s very different, which ironically, is fresh.” And that means details like pinstripe ties, floral patterns, metallic buttons and shoes (of course, shoes) are increasingly important.

Not surprisingly, her Etsy shop, *Elegantly Wasted Vintage*, is stocked with travel finds, indicative of the universality of Midwest style and her mission. The one-of-a-kind pieces are as distinctive as an ‘80s-era cream double-breasted, nautical-style coat or an aquatic green-and-blue short-sleeved dress with gold buttons. “These pieces are old, but that they are around proves their quality,” says Dimperio.

In the works for Dimperio is a redesign of *MidWasteland*, reformatting it into an online zine with more Midwest and pop culture fashion coverage. The focus is likely to remain on style setters. “It’s those people I look for, the person that does something completely organic.” And if organic means a blue denim sleeveless jumpsuit, so much the better. ●●●



REWIRE YOUR GREEN

By Mackenzie Owens • Photo by Matt Soria

The Center for Green Technology offers classes for eco-curious urbanites.

WE GET IT: You're busy with work, class and everyday life. But the free courses at the Center for Green Technology's Green Tech U (445 N. Sacramento Blvd., 312.746.9642) are worth your time, particularly because they'll take so little of it. Each class—no more than two hours long and offered several times a year—offers tips on saving money, growing your own food and gaining a greater understanding of Chicago. If you attend enough courses, you can even earn a certificate in the green specialty you choose. Here are some classes offered in the coming months.

Around the house

Offering a hands-on demonstration on how to prepare clay-rich paint and plaster, **Natural Finishes for Urban Dwellings** is the perfect course for green redecorating tips. Natural finishes are soothing to the senses, gentle on the earth and less expensive than you may think. Besides being economical, they're fun to work with and can be used as glue or architectural ornaments in addition to paint and plaster.

Fabric manufacturing is a resource-intensive process that uses countless liters of water while releasing dyes and toxins into the environment. **Green Materials for Creators and Consumers** teaches how to minimize the environmental impact of material purchases, including clothing, and discusses the lifecycle of green materials. "People are now taking notice

that there are other fabrics available," says Madhoolica Dear, design professional and past instructor at Green Tech U.

For easy solutions that you can share with your neighbors and roommates, **Greening a Renter's Lifestyle** offers strategic approaches for urban-dwellers to shrink their ecological footprint without stepping on their landlord's toes. With the emphasis on energy consumption and gardening, both your diet and your wallet will be greener than ever.

Greentropolis

Get involved in taking control of your city's environmental health by attending **Implementing the Chicago Climate Action Plan**. This interactive discussion will review the city's plans to adjust to the climate changes already taking place in Chicago and minimize the changes yet to come. It's something that we all have a stake in and particularly relevant for representatives of community groups.

If you're interested in a more artistic subject—like the future of vintage buildings in our "newer is always better" culture—**Historic Preservation and Sustainability** is a must. With new technology and building materials on the rise, will there be a place left for historic architecture? This course aims to eliminate the divide between new and old and teaches how different architectural styles can work together for a more sustainable future. ●●●

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Photo by Nolan Wells

NERD IS THE WORD

The unlikely social success of Chicago's friendliest club

By Thomas Pardee • Illustration by Eric Ellis

THERE'S AN IRONY in the idea of a social gathering of nerds—as nerds are, by very definition, anti-social.

That irony isn't lost on Rachel Baker, one of three co-founders of the remarkable Chicago Nerd Social Club, an organization of like-minded hyper-enthusiasts that has held a series of successful citywide social events since its inception in March 2009.

Even so, Baker declares her club an oxymoron-free zone. "Think about it—to play Dungeons and Dragons, you need a group. If you're in Second Life, you're around other people all the time, even if you're not in front of them," says Baker, a 32-year-old IT consultant from Andersonville and self-proclaimed World of Warcraft devotee. "All these people are social with those who play with them.

We're trying to bring that [experience] into real life."

Not that the droves of unofficial members of CNSC are all gamers. (More than 600 belong to the club's Facebook page, and its Twitter account boasts more than 2,000 followers.) Some are computer nerds; some are comic book nerds; some are indie film nerds—but all, says Baker, are passionate enthusiasts who are hungry for community—whether they know it or not.

After convening as an impromptu Tweet-up, CNSC held its first official launch event in May 2009 at Risqué Café in Wrigleyville, which drew more than 100 eager

nerds. It has since launched its own monthly Sci-Fi bookclub—Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* and Frank Herbert's *Dune* are a few recent selections—and held a raucous "Nerd-O-Ween" party in October. Their events are either free or nominally priced, from \$5-\$15. The income generated goes to sponsor future events. (The cash earned from its launch event went toward giving away an HP Netbook the next month.)

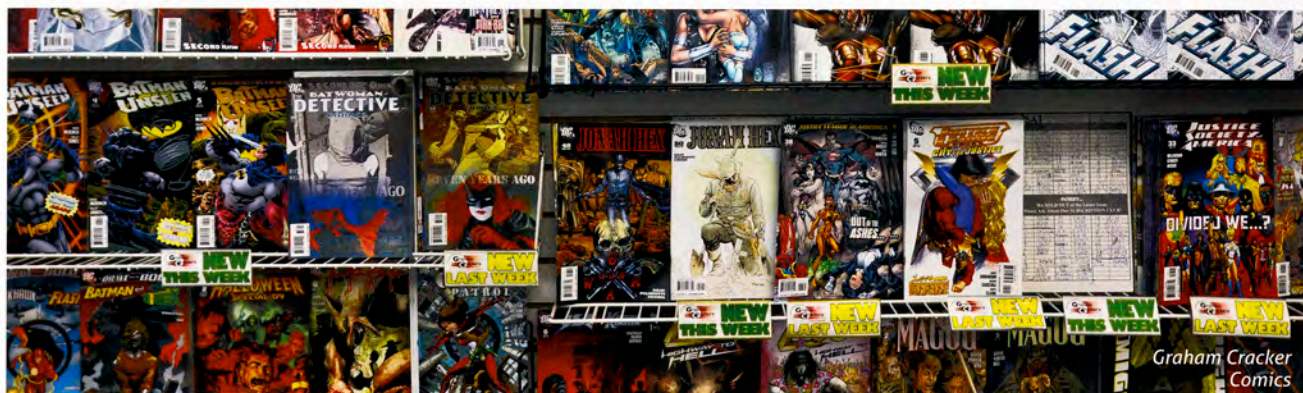
The club's members say that Nerd gatherings beat trying to force conversation at a more traditional social club.

"You feel intimidated approaching some of the people at those [non-nerd] events," says Zach Schneider, a 26-year-old web developer who frequently attends CNSC events. "This way, you know that everyone is here because they like comics and you like comics. You already have a common interest." As the club grows, its mission will remain fostering a substantive and non-judgemental environment for nerds of every feather.

"We're all still [introverts]," Baker says. "But if we see someone sitting in the corner, we talk to them. 'Hey, how ya doin'? What kind of nerd are you? A comic book nerd? Really... DC or Marvel?' Their eyes light up, and they start talking. Now they're having fun." ●●●



GET YOUR FANBOY ON

**Uninitiated comic-kazes: Start here.**

By Kim Manning • Photo by Cooper Link

A comic book store can be a scary place for a newbie. But it doesn't take long to see why these mini-meccas thrive in Chicago. Bursting with some of the most unique and compelling literature and artwork around, they're a unique blend of bookstore, art gallery, gift shop and arcade. Best of all, they're a comfort zone for the nerd in all of us.

Quimby's

This avant-garde Wicker Park bookstore is home to many indie and hand-made comics, including some erotic "comixxx" (if you're into that sort of thing). The vintage shop is a neighborhood fave because it supports area zines and artists and hosts book signings and readings. Plus, it features a wide selection of periodicals including many indie mags.

On the off-chance you're bored, take some pictures in their old-school photo booth, complete with props.

1854 W. NORTH AVE., 773.342.0910

Challengers Comics + Conversation

With its bright Iron-Man-red interiors covered with artwork by both professionals and customers, Challengers is a welcoming place for fans to relax and enjoy their favorites. Owners Patrick Brower and W. Dal Bush opened this Bucktown shop in March 2008 after almost 20 years as comic book retailers. Not to be missed: The annual 24-Hour Comic Day, during which 15 brave souls attempt to write and draw their own 24-page comic book on site, all in a day.

1845 N. WESTERN AVE., 773.278.0155

Chicago Comics

A sister store to Quimby's, this Lakeview joint is the city's quintessential—and least ironic—comic shop. With collectors' comics behind the register, an inflatable Spidey hanging from the ceiling and a glowing neon Superman on the wall, this shop is a safe haven for über-fans but still mainstream-friendly enough for the rest of us.

3244 N. CLARK ST., 773.528.1983

Graham Cracker Comics

Walk in any day of the week, and you're likely to find the real-life equivalent of the Comic Book Guy from the Simpsons holding forth. A traditional, nerd-friendly superhero store with eight locations besides the downtown hub, Graham Cracker has an extensive back-issue collection that makes even well-versed heads spin.

77 E. MADISON ST., 312.629.1810

5. Have a Twitter account

4. Play Farmville

3. Quote Stewie or Brian

2. Can't quote the Big Lebowski

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by Joseph Hernandez

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THE COMEBACK KIDS ON ICE

Count the reasons why Blackhawks games are drawing record crowds.



By Travis Truitt
Illustration by Jacki Curley

Once dubbed “the worst franchise in all of sports” by ESPN, the Chicago Blackhawks pro hockey team turned the page in 2008-09 when a younger, brassier and—we’ll just say it—better generation of Hawks advanced to the conference finals. Today, with a fresh new image and a growing following, the Blackhawks are the hottest ticket in town. Here’s why.

The Resurrection

Long-time Blackhawks owner Bill Wirtz defined “old school” but not in a good way. He didn’t allow home games to be televised and even fired popular announcer Pat Foley, the voice of the team for 25 years.

After Wirtz’s death in 2007, his son Rocky Wirtz made sweeping changes to the organization, even bringing Foley back to the broadcasting booth. Under his leadership, the Hawks hosted the NHL’s second annual Winter Classic, an outdoor event against the Detroit Red Wings, in front of 40,000 fans at Wrigley Field. The Winter Classic drew hockey’s largest television audience in 33 years.

The Players

Nothing attracts sports fans more than a winning team and charismatic stars. The selection of baby-faced 21-year-old Patrick Kane as the No. 1 pick in the 2007 draft and the addition of Jonathan Toews (pronounced “Taves”), who at age 20 became the third youngest team captain in NHL history, nudged the Blackhawks in 2009 to their best season in 17 years.

That there are hopeful rumblings of a Stanley Cup championship among fans is an understatement. The Blackhawks haven’t won the championship since 1961, but the team’s second wind has some onlookers daring to compare today’s new talent to the stars—like Bobby Hull and Stan Mikita—who clinched the Cup almost 50 years ago.

“[Kane and Toews have] captured the imagination of the city,” says Jim Neveau, the Blackhawks’ correspondent for hockeywriters.com. “People tend to gravitate towards exuberant players. And they can play!”

The Center Experience

Adhering to a long-standing tradition, the United Center erupts in “The Roar”—and sometimes fans even light a few

sparklers—during the singing of “The Star Spangled Banner” before each game, with thousands of fans eagerly participating in this ritual catharsis. “I think we’re the only city anywhere that cheers throughout the song,” says lifelong fan Monika Hartmanowski, 25.

“You just get the chills,” says sports writer Neveau. “It’s a great feeling.”

The United Center is especially alive when the Hawks play one of their rivals, particularly the Red Wings. “Both are Original Six franchises,” says Neveau, noting that there were only six NHL teams until 1967. “They’ve played each other over 700 times. There’s a lot of history there. Fans of the two cities’ [teams] despise each other.”

Even so, newcomers never fear—as Neveau says, hockey fans are friendly, knowledgeable and even seem to enjoy explaining the rules and nuances of the game. Plus, there’s never been a better time to don that iconic Indian-head sweater and jump on the bandwagon.

“We’re young, exciting, never out of the game and always playing 100 percent,” says Steve Krok, 31, a lifelong fan. “And we scream our heads off during the anthem! What’s not to love?” ●●●

Barato, svalutato, rtin. No matter how you say it, "cheap" can also mean delicious, especially in Chicago. Here are five places to grab killer ethnic plates for less than \$10 a pop. ¡Sabroso!

By Veronica Libman
Photo by Ruben Cantu

TEN GREAT EATS

Located just west of Little Italy, **Damenzo's Pizza** is the perfect hole-in-the-wall for your Italian fix. The hefty lasagna (\$7.49) is a steal, layered with mozzarella cheese, a hearty meat sauce, chunks of tomatoes and a healthy dose of oregano and basil. Stuffed to the hilt with your choice of filling, the acclaimed Pizza Puff (\$6.99) is anything but—it is easily two meals.

2324 W. TAYLOR ST., 312.421.1142

Just steps from the colorful Argyle CTA Red Line stop, **Ba Le Bakery** specializes in Vietnamese food—the original fusion cuisine. You can't go wrong with the Bun Thit Nuong (\$6.95)— piping-hot grilled pork, cold rice vermicelli, veggies and a homemade lemon fish sauce—or the Banh Mi (\$2.95)—a deceptively simple sandwich of either meat or tofu, mayonnaise, vinegary pickled carrot, sweet daikon, jalapeno and cilantro stuffed inside a fresh baguette.

5018 N. BROADWAY AVE., 773.561.4424

As you walk inside Pilsen favorite **Nuevo Leon**, you're likely to be greeted by the smell of aromatic veggies from

their Chuletas de Puerco a la Mexicana (\$8)—grilled pork chops with peppers and onions. Also try the Pollo en Mole (\$8), which marries chicken with a chili and chocolate-laced sauce.

1515 W. 18TH ST., 312.421.1517

Lee Wing Wah's fresh, tasty cuisine is a welcome alternative to assembly-line food court fare. If you want to stick with an old standby, order the Szechwan Chicken laced with hidden chili peppers (\$7.95). The BBQ Pork Strips appetizer (\$4.95) is stick-to-your-bones good and sizzles as you eat.

2147 S CHINA PL., 312.808.1628

Before browsing the sari shops dotting Devon Ave., head over to **Indian Garden** to indulge in the heady spiciness of Indian food. The Dahi Aloo Poori (\$4.50) will stimulate your senses with crispy wafers, potatoes and chickpeas in a tamarind-yogurt sauce, all topped with chat masala. Craving something vegetarian? Order the Bhuni Gobhi (\$9.95), a cauliflower stir-fry with ginger and cumin exploding with flavor.

2546 DEVON AVE., 773.338.2929



Banh Mi sandwich at Ba Le Bakery

SPICE UP YOUR SHOPPING

By
Sophie
Block

Chicago's ethnic grocery stores offer a smattering of global flavors.

PHOTO BY COOPER LINK



CHICAGO IS CHOCK-FULL of ethnic grocery stores where the options are vast and authentic, the staff is knowledgeable and the aromas will take you to another land. Food-wise, the experience is on a completely different level from the typical grab-and-run trip to your local Jewel.

Pete's Fresh Market (Mexican)

Noted for its wide range of fresh vegetables and fruits delivered daily, Pete's is the place to go for specialty Mexican ingredients. It boasts an extensive dried pepper selection, including those cascabels (small, medium-hot chili peppers) you've been looking so hard for, and an array of Mexican cheeses to top your chile rellenos. Print out coupons from petesfresh.com for weekly steals.

2526 W. CERMAK RD., 773.254.8400

Patel Brothers (Indian)

Head to Patel Brothers for fresh ingredients to make your own curry. This small chain's main headquarters in Rogers Park has too many spices to count (the manager guesses the number falls somewhere near 600), and they're all imported from India. Don't feel like cooking? Browse their ready-to-eat and frozen foods section for more imported Indian options.

2610 W. DEVON AVE., 773.262.7777

Conte Di Savoia (Italian)

A pillar of the Taylor Street Italian community for more than 60 years, Conte Di Savoia is noted for its homemade ravioli, marinara and Bolognese sauces and mozzarella as well as its selection of vintage Italian wines. Be sure to order ahead for one of their delizioso subs—the secret is out.

1438 W. TAYLOR ST., 312.666.3471

Athens Grocery (Greek)

Located in the heart of Greektown, this family-owned neighborhood grocery will take you on a culinary journey through old Hellás. Be sure to check out its impressive selection of 15-plus imported Greek olive oils, Bulgarian, Greek and domestic feta and hand-kneaded phyllo for the perfect spanakopita.

324 S. HALSTED ST., 312.454.0940

Middle East Bakery & Grocery (Middle Eastern)

Try this Middle Eastern grub hub in Andersonville for hard-to-find spices and blends like za'tar, the perfect foil for toasted pita bread. Swing by the deli for a hot kibbi (meat or spinach pie). Both the homemade hummus and baba ghanouj (eggplant pate) are perfect on crispy pita chips made in their brick oven.

1512 W. FOSTER AVE., 773.561.2224

5. Jamaican Omelette at Tempo cafe

4. Chicago Dog at Weiner's Circle

3. Flautas at Flash Taco

2. Columbus Pizza at Godfather's

1. The Zorba at Clarke's

by Joseph Hernandez

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Photo by Zach Sabin

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DESIGN BY CRAIGSLIST

By Thomas Pardee
Photo by Sam Gove

Yes, you can furnish a studio apartment and move in within 24 hours—without losing your sanity or blowing your budget.

IN THEORY, BUYING furniture via Craigslist means scooping up secondhand goods at great prices, but the reality rarely measures up; you travel across town only to find that the couch that looked so great in the pixelated photo is really beat-up junk. Or it's everything you hoped it would be, but somebody else got there first.

For my recent move into my first (non-dorm) studio apartment, I was determined to beat the odds. I would get what I wanted, at the price I wanted and be able to pick everything up in a single day. Here's how I made it happen.

Figure out what you need. I needed a couch or futon, a bed, an entertainment center, a kitchen table and chairs, a coffee table and a set of dressers.

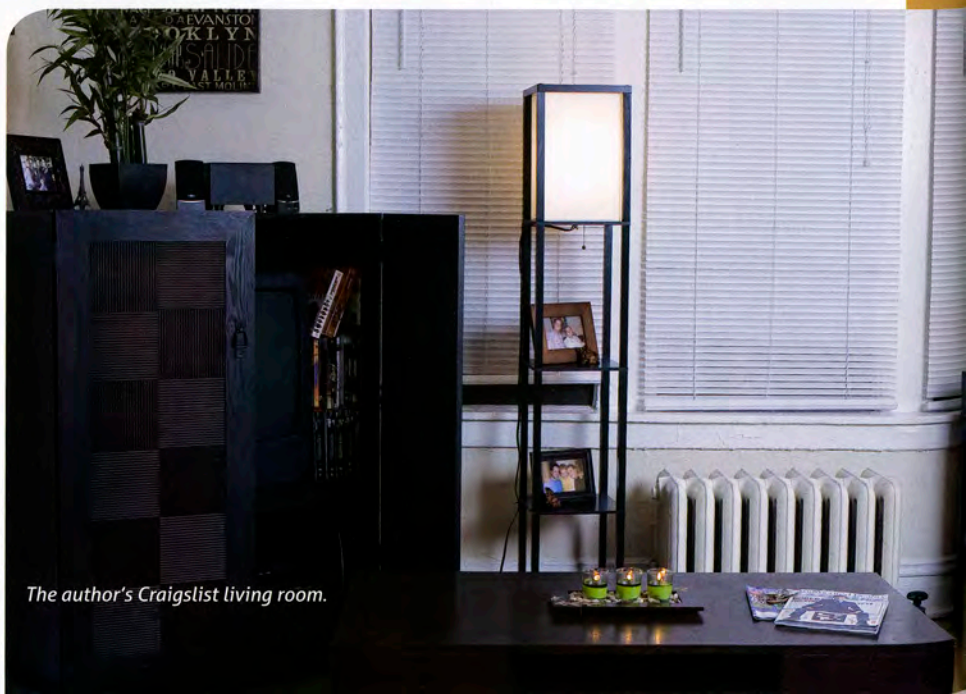
Set a budget. Mine was a bit flexible, but topped off at \$800. I wanted to take a definite step up from dorm chic, but I needed bargains wherever possible.

Define your look. Initially I was guided more by what I didn't want: plastics, metals and anything too modern. I hoped for something rich and traditional but knew it would depend on what was available in my new neighborhood.

Target potential purchases. The days leading up to the move found me camped out online, posting want ads and sending a flurry of responses to items that fit my needs. Some things I really wanted, and others I just chased as fall-backs. At one point, I had more

than a dozen requests out for just bed frames and mattresses. My purchases had to be within close range of my new neighborhood so I could minimize time and mileage costs. I ran searches for furniture by neighborhood and only looked at ads with pictures so I knew what I was getting. I also pinned buyers down for specifics—how new was the almost-new bed? Who was the furniture manufacturer and what was the model name or number so I could check the current retail price? I pressed sellers to disclose all defects before I visited and ruled out any that were damaged, even slightly.

Set up an inspection time. This is the most crucial step. First, I ruthlessly edited my online prospects. (Some, like my futon, I just needed to confirm were up-to-snuff, while others, like the potential beds and dressers, had yet to be pinned down), I lined up a series of appointments for the day before moving. I set off that day, armed with measuring tape, the apartment's specs and my camera/map/calculator/email device (read: iPhone), negotiating everything from prices to possible pick-up times, sometimes asking for an extra item to sweeten the deal. This works especially well during moving sales, when sellers are desperate to unload possessions. Sellers often pushed me to commit on-the-spot, but I wiggled out of that by saying I would get back to them after I measured my apartment one more time to make sure things fit. This allowed me to squeeze in a visit to Lakeview's Brown Elephant Resale Shop (3651 N. Halsted St.) at the end of the day to see if the store had better bargains on hand. This strategy paid off, netting me the perfect Trinni coffee table for just \$35, more than \$300 below its retail price.



The author's Craigslist living room.

By Joseph Hernandez

Plan your moving day. After picking up the van, I made six stops to collect my CL purchases plus additional trips to a storage locker and my boyfriend's house for free dressers. (Not my style but they're going in the closet.) It was a very tight schedule that required staying in constant contact with my sellers to inform them of any delays. I realized how crucial it is to enlist the help of friends (or at least an extra pair of hands) and to offer to repay them with dinner or drinks and help with their next move in return.

Relax and enjoy your purchases. When everything fell into place, my new apartment had a traditional yet contemporary look, with dark brown-and-cream upholstery and bedding marrying happily with the light wood flooring, soft beige walls, and of course, the furniture. Home at last. ♦♦♦

DECOR TO DIY FOR

Rework your unsightly furniture with these inexpensive tips.

Suffocating from unwanted secondhand furniture from Village Discount? Did Grandma give you her (fugly) credenza that matches nothing in your place? Don't throw it out; fix it up.

TOOL BELT

For under \$75, you can assemble a basic toolbox, including drill, drill bit set, hammer, hack saw and a sanding block. Start by buying a drill and then add attachments (as needed) for cutting, sanding and buffing surfaces. A good choice is the Black and Decker 12-volt drill (\$39.99 at Target) or the smaller Black and Decker 6-volt drill (\$13.99), made for smaller hands and tighter spaces but with the trade-off being less power. These basics will get you through most DIY and repair projects you embark upon.

HARDWARE

By simply changing the knobs or pulls on drawers or cabinets, you can instantly update a piece of furniture. Anthropologie, the whimsical sibling of cool-monger Urban Outfitters, carries a number of knobs and pulls, ranging in price from \$6 for a green-faceted glass knob to the \$10 uber-neat loggerhead turtle knob. Local hardware and craft stores like Menards and JoAnn's carry standard modern-looking pulls for as low as \$1.27. Ambitious DIY acolytes can switch out a desk or table's legs to revive a tired piece. Check Ikea for a dizzying range of leg options in their Vika table line, like the jet-sleek Inge (\$12 a leg).

LAQUER, GLOSS AND MATTE—OH MY!

For a high-style, low-cost look, try this: Strip the old paint or stain from your salvaged furniture with a sander or chemical stripper. (Don't forget the face mask and goggles!) Apply two or three coats of a high-impact paint in colors like aqua, lemon yellow or a rich navy blue, and you'll be the proud owner of a deceptively luxurious statement piece. Play around with finish; glossy paints give projects a contemporary sheen, while matte is understated though sophisticated. Check your local hardware store's returned paint shelf for big bargains. A random grab-bag of color, this is an inexpensive option for the daring DIYer. That formerly \$45 can of Behr will be a fraction of the cost.

High-impact paints can also be used on home decor accessories you've grown bored with. Table lamps, side tables and old mirrors or frames will look new and fresh with a new coat of paint. To bring a sense of cohesion and afterthought to a room, take mismatching lamps and paint them both in the same color; finish off with matching shades, and they'll look as if they are part of a designer's collection.

FINAL PURCHASES	*Retail price	CL price
Albany black wood futon, frame and mattress...	\$500	\$130
IKEA Malm Bed with frame, slats, mattress, topper...	\$390	\$200
Trinni coffee table...	\$400	\$35
Entertainment armoire...	\$190	\$120
York pub table...	\$435	\$100
Two swivel chairs...	\$300	\$30
	\$2,215	\$615

TOTAL SAVED - \$1,600

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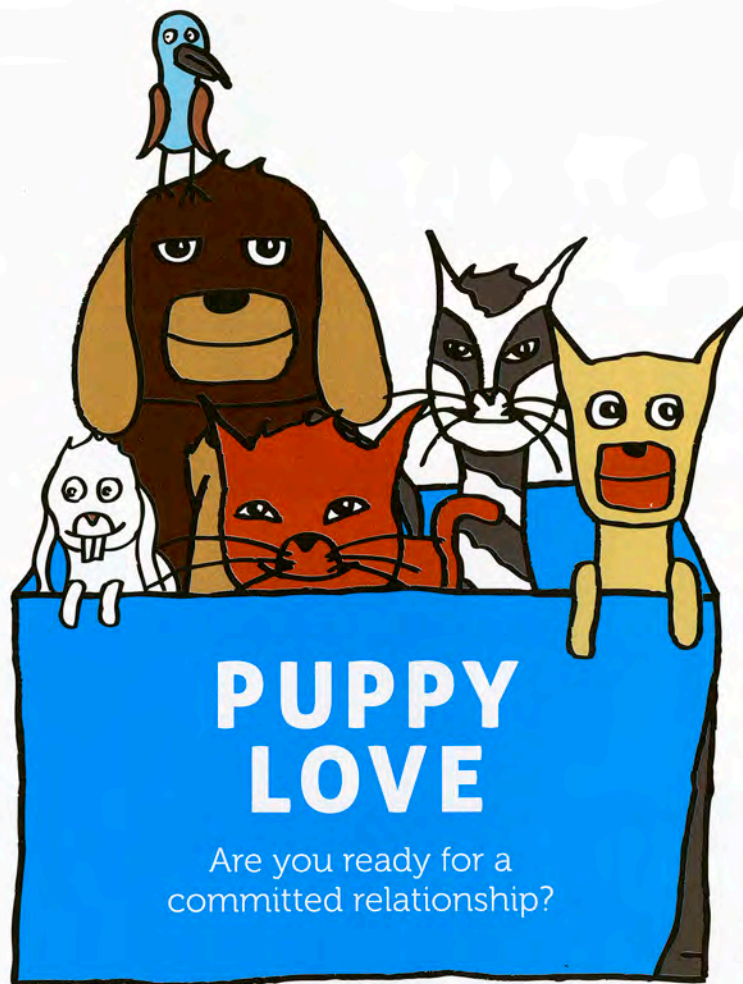
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By Jacki Curley
Illustration by Shane Mahn

THERE ARE MANY pleasures associated with pet ownership—taking long morning walks on weekends, having a snuggle buddy to help you forget the day's disappointments and watching your pet grow into maturity as a life-long companion. But morning walks require picking up dog waste; snuggle buddies necessitate a lifetime supply of lint rollers; and lifelong companions need costly medical care from \$500 to \$2000 a year. Is that the kind of commitment you're ready for? Here is some food for thought when considering pet adoption.

Foster a pet

If you've never had a pet before, consider volunteering at a shelter or foster parenting a pet before you adopt.

Fostering means caring for an animal for an agreed-upon period of time (as little as two weeks in some cases). Foster parents should be able to transport animals to necessary medical appointments, pay for food costs,

administer medicine to special-needs pets and respond with patience and kindness as pets acclimate themselves to new living situations. "I don't know where I'd be without Iva," says Christine Vittorio, 24, who has fostered Iva, a rescued gun-metal grey pitbull for a year. "My parents want to adopt her now, which means I don't have to worry about being separated from her."

Check your pocketbook

The Veterinarian Centers of America suggest examining your budget to make sure that you have enough money for all the initial adoption costs plus future expenses. Puppies and kittens must be vaccinated and spayed or neutered; fortunately, those fees are usually built into the costs of adopting dogs and cats from animal shelters. Chicago's Anti-Cruelty Society offers one of the most reasonably priced options, charging \$80 for dogs, \$60 for cats and \$140 for pitbulls and pitbull mixes. The fee includes a seven-week Dog Training 101 class along

with initial vet exams and vaccinations. At PAWS Chicago, a no-kill shelter, the costs are higher at \$205 per adult dog and \$275 for puppies, but \$75 of the adoption fee is rebated later upon proof that you've trained your pet. (An obedience school certificate will suffice.)

Older pets can be a great option for first-time owners because they tend to be better trained. On the other hand, older animals may have a hard time adjusting from their old homes and owners to your apartment and roommates, and caring for their health issues is likely to be quite expensive. Some shelters, however, will provide a medical stipend for older dogs and cats.

Regardless of your new pet's first health tests or where you adopted it from, many shelters and animal hospitals suggest a ten-day follow-up with a vet. PAWS even has a two-week trial period with a new pet to see how things go at home before finalizing the adoption. •••



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BUILDING A NEST

What you need to know now
about buying your first property.

By Mackenzie Owens • Illustration by Eric Ellis

HOME OWNERSHIP IS the great American dream, not simply because it means having a place of your own but because it makes good financial sense. Even if you're years away from a down payment, the time to start educating yourself about the home-buying process is now.

- **Establish good credit.** Your credit rating plays a vital role in all major purchases including homes. Paying credit cards and loans, cell phone bills and rent on time is essential to show creditors that you are financially responsible. While establishing credit history is important, beware of having too many open credit accounts. When applying for a home loan, your outstanding debt (credit cards, student loans, car loans, etc.) should not be more than 36 percent of your gross income, advises mortgage broker Kyle Frame, branch manager of Admiral Home Mortgage Honolulu.
- **Put away money for a down payment.** The larger your down payment, the lower your mortgage payments, notes the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's online advice to first-time buyers. Most down payments in Chicago require a minimum of three to five percent of the total cost of the home, with 10-20 percent preferred. Most lenders will want to see at least six months of mortgage payments in your account to approve you, says Frame. The money should be in your account for a minimum of three months to establish a history of reliable income. After the adjustable mortgage debacle of this past decade, it's understandable.

- **Learn the lingo.** For a financial decision of this magnitude, you have to understand what you're getting into. Familiarize yourself with real estate agents' and mortgage brokers' lingo so they can talk to you instead of at you. A good place to start is the Real Estate Marketplace Glossary at ftc.gov.
- **Find a broker.** It's important early in the home-buying process is to ask a mentor or someone you trust for a referral to a real estate broker. "[A broker's] job is to protect your interests—that's their responsibility to you," says real estate agent Marty Winefield of @Properties in Chicago. Seek referrals for a mortgage broker as well, as they, too, are a crucial part of the process.
- **Pick a 'hood.** Transportation, gentrification, recreation, education—considering every detail when choosing where to live is a ball of confusion, but you've got to give the process due diligence. Have a clear idea of your budget, your lifestyle and your long-term plans, and choose a neighborhood and home that fits not just who you are, but whom you hope to be.
- **Read the fine print.** Beyond the actual price tag for the home, other costs come with ownership: Homeowners' insurance, monthly utility bills and maintenance costs, to name a few. Property taxes are usually rolled up into the mortgage payment in an escrow account, but not always, according to Frame. Happy hunting!



WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

Come graduation day, you gain a diploma but lose something else: your health insurance. Don't panic—follow these tips and you'll be okay.

By Ebony Haynes • Illustration by Alex Todaro

RECENT COLLEGE GRAD Adrienne Hill moved to Atlanta with plans to open her own entertainment marketing company. But not everything has proceeded smoothly. She was immediately dropped from her mother's health coverage after graduation. Soon after, an emergency surgery left her with \$5000 in medical expenses.

"Right now health insurance is just too expensive for me to pay for, considering I am not bringing in much money. To be honest, I really don't understand my other options," says Hill.

She's not alone in her confusion. Many young people mistakenly assume health insurance isn't important, says Jennifer L. Nicholson, a program officer for the Affordable Health Insurance program of the Commonwealth Fund, which researches health care policy.

Nicholson authored a 2009 report analyzing health needs of young adults. She found half of young adults are overweight or obese; many admit to drinking and/or smoking and 15 percent of young adults between 18 and 29 suffer from chronic conditions such as asthma and diabetes. Coverage for this group is vital, points out Nicholson, yet nearly 13.2 million young adults ages 19 to 29—almost 30 percent of that age group—lacked coverage in 2007.

Declining employment rates widen the coverage gap. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, only 19.7 percent of 2009 graduates who applied for a job are currently employed (compared to the 51 percent of '07 graduates who had secured jobs by graduation). Employer projections, however, predict a seven percent drop in hiring in 2010. For those seeking employer coverage, this doesn't bode well.

One available option for post-grads is to simply continue the coverage they have via COBRA (the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act), which allows dependent children to continue their health insurance policies at a group rate for 18-36 months. COBRA defines "dependent children" according to the language of the parents' employer-sponsored insurance and extends benefits accordingly.

Twenty-six states including Illinois have passed laws allowing parents to continue including their children on their insurance policies through ages 24-27. To be eligible in Illinois, you must be single, under 26 years-old and covered by your parent's policy. Dependent military veterans are covered until 30. Pending passage of national health care legislation, dependent coverage will be extended to at least 25.

For a quick fix, consider short-term medical insurance. Short-term insurance has low premiums and coverage is very limited, but is readily available and can go into effect as quickly as the next day. According to the Health Insurance Resource Center, "the policies are typically offered with a selection of premiums and deductibles and are promoted as providing savings of up to 35 percent." These do not take the place of comprehensive coverage.

Finally, be sure to bone up on the basics as you shop policies. Check out web sites like healthinsuranceinfo.net and the National Health Law Program's healthcarecoach.com. •••

INSURANCE PRIMER

- Consider whether your needs are served by managed care (such as an HMO) versus simply reimbursement for medical expenses. Managed care plans work with health care providers and medical facilities to provide care at reduced costs. These providers make up the plan's network, but the amount you pay depends on the network's rules.
- HMOs (Health Maintenance Organizations) will refer you to doctors within a network.
- PPOs (Preferred Provider Organizations) cover visits to doctors outside an HMO's network. The advantage of the PPO is the ability to choose doctors without referrals or approvals, but at a higher cost.
- POS (Point of Service Plans) allow you to choose between an HMO and a PPO each time you need care.
- Insurance policies with deductibles require you to pay a percentage of your medical bills before coverage is extended. The higher the deductible, the lower the premium but you will be paying more in the event of a serious illness. Some plans let you pay each visit until the deductible is satisfied. —EH

HEALTH ON POINT

By Travis Truitt
Illustration by Eric Ellis

Sure, it's a little scary, but acupuncture may be more beneficial than you think.



ACUPUNCTURIST TERI CALANDRA wanted to be a dancer, but during the 20 years she spent in the dance world, she frequently was sidelined with chronic back pain, chronic migraines and knee injuries, even undergoing arthroscopic surgery. When all else failed, she turned to acupuncture and found salvation and the desire to share this treatment with others.

Today, the South Loop practitioner finds herself using acupuncture to treat an increasing number of everyday ailments from digestive disorders and respiratory issues to chronic pain and women's health issues.

She attracts new patients through what she calls an "auricular happy

hour," which allows patients to receive acupuncture at key points in their ears. "It gives your body the chance to forget about the stressors of everyday life and puts you in a near meditative state. There's a sort of utopia-type feeling when you're done," she says.

Acupuncture can be especially useful for battling stress because it activates the physical equivalent of a reset button, says Frank Scott, Dean of the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, in Chicago. "Acupuncture can... reduce that fight-or-flight response to help you recalibrate, so your body isn't running behind."

The techniques Scott teaches have been practiced in China for more than 2,000 years. Very thin needles are

inserted into specified body points along channels called meridians. The needles stimulate the flow of qi (pronounced CHEE), which is the body's natural energy or life force. Practitioners believe this energy sometimes becomes stagnant in patterns of disharmony. Patients generally feel a light sensation upon the insertion of the needles and fall into a relaxed state, sometimes sleeping on an acupuncturist's table for 20 minutes or more while the sterile, one-time-use needles stimulate the various points.

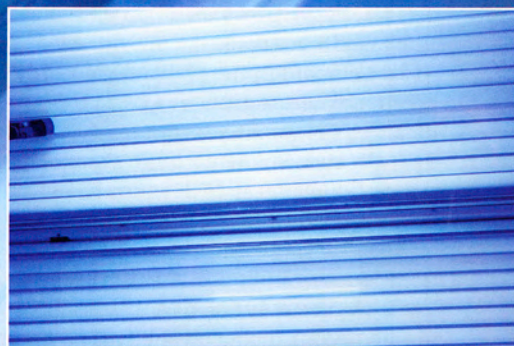
Data on the effectiveness of acupuncture continues to mount although the mechanism by which it works is still something of a mystery. Through a growing body of research, the World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health have concluded that acupuncture is effective in treating certain illnesses and injuries, including headaches, migraines, back and knee pain, allergies (allergic rhinitis, hay fever), rheumatoid arthritis, nausea and vomiting and adverse reactions to chemotherapy, among others.

At a growing number of locations, including Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, which has a Center for Integrative Medicine and Wellness, and the University of Arizona, medical doctors work with acupuncturists. "More often than not [treatments are] done sequentially or in separate visits," says Dr. Victoria Maizes of the University of Arizona. "I very frequently refer patients to acupuncture," she says, "often to help mitigate the side effects of other treatments." ●●●

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BRANCH OUT

Take your exercise routine out of the gym and into the trees.

By Sophie Block • Illustration by Adam Hanson

URBANITES AND COUNTRY-FOLK alike are catching onto a type of climb that doesn't involve an elevator to the top floor of the concrete forest—it may not take you as high, but the reward is much greater. This is tree climbing, a sport involving ropes, harnesses, and of course, branches.

Tree climbing is a joy even for the work-out-phobe. Being up in the branches and rubbing elbows with birds can be exhilarating and exercise your mind in addition to your arms, legs and abs. "You can be in the city and get up in the tree in the canopy and almost escape the urban bustle around you. [You can] take in nature on a micro-scale," says Don Roppolo, an arborist (or tree surgeon) by trade and an avid recreational tree climber. He's taught tree climbing out West and in Costa Rica but currently resides in Chicago working as the regional coordinator for The Care of Trees, an arboriculture company. His rule of thumb is that anybody who can walk up to a tree can climb—but don't let the blind lead the blind. "It's the same [as] rock climbing; it can be very dangerous or very safe depending on how knowledgeable you are," says Roppolo. All climbers should learn from an experienced climber and go through a checklist of things, like inspecting the tree for rot and making sure all knots are secure and carabiners are locked. And always climb with a partner.

Tree climbing gives you and your friends an opportunity to experience nature without having to leave the city. "In a huge urban environment you can kind of forget where you [are]," Roppolo says. But being up in the canopy allows climbers to escape the dizziness of downtown and train-induced motion sickness to experience a sense of tranquility—if they can knock out that fear of heights.

Most tree climbers in the Midwest will ascend to about 70 feet high (about five stories). Enthusiasts spend days climbing, sleeping and hanging out—literally—up in the canopy of the Redwoods in California and Douglas-firs in Washington, where Roppolo says he climbed to about 200 feet high (about 16 stories). "Once you get up there," he says, "you're surrounded by foliage, and you forget how high you really are." And don't forget, the higher you climb, the more fun it is to slide back down. ●●●



Joliet Junior College and University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point offer courses on tree climbing. Arbor companies such as The Care of Trees also offer occasional tree climbing opportunities open to the public. —SB

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Avoid gym fatigue with classes that seem more like play than a workout.

By Tanya King



YOU'RE SITTING ON the couch and your gym bag is in the corner of the room, making a mockery of that tired old resolution you make every January 1. Maybe the problem is boredom with your usual fitness routine—which probably means it's no longer challenging you physically. You need these fresh moves and classes to get back on track:

Relieve stress and get a great cardiovascular workout by attending the Recess class at **Cheetah Gym** (Bucktown location only). Re-experience your elementary school favorites like dodgeball, hopscotch, double dutch and Simon Says. Or try Cheetah's Gravity Interval class (Bucktown and Edgewater locations) for improved balance along with cardio and weight training. While one half of the class does gravity exercises, the other half does other conditioning work like calisthenics or jumping rope. The instructors strive to make every class different from the

last to keep challenging your body's muscles, according to Greg Staley, program director and instructor. Classes are included in gym memberships or you can buy a 10-visit punch card for \$119 for use at one location, or \$139 for use at all locations. **BUCKTOWN: 1934 W. NORTH AVE., 773.394.5900; EDGEWATER: 5838 N. BROADWAY AVE., 773.728.6600.**

For the ultimate in gravity-defying feats, choose a class in circus arts. At **Meirmanov Sports Acro & Circus Arts**, you can choose from beginning-level fitness classes to competition-level classes to get in touch with your inner performer. The Meirmanov Sports Acro team is the only registered competitive Junior Olympic Sports Acrobatic team in Illinois. The center's more advanced classes double as team practice but are open to everyone. In its Aerial Fitness class, students learn to use actual circus equipment like a

trapeze, Spanish web (an aerial rope) and the spider climb (a magnetic wall climbing system). The Sports Acrobatics classes feature tumbling, learning handstands and building pyramids. "We incorporate a lot of different things. It's about learning strength, balance and trust," says Almas Meirmanov, instructor and son of Nourbol Meirmanov, founder and director of the team. Classes start at \$115. **1934 N. CAMPBELL AVE., 773.550.1521.**

Dancing to house music is a great way to burn calories and lose inhibitions. **HouseDanceChicago** offers classes in this style, which is influenced by African, tap, salsa and Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art. Students learn basic break footwork and "jacking," Chicago's house dancing style. It's a great work out and you can take your moves out to the club. The class is \$95 for six weeks with the first class free. **1439 W. WELLINGTON AVE., 773.512.7384.**

dept:

travel bug

HOME-GROWN ALTRUISM

When volunteering opportunities abound, ignoring Mother Earth is officially a party foul.

By Kim Manning

Photo by Ashley Rae Mathias



MORE COLLEGE STUDENTS than ever are trading their spring break bikinis and beer bong for clipboards and hiking boots. Participants say it's a great way to gain worldly experience, meet like-minded people and collect the rewards only philanthropy can yield. Here are a few nature-oriented activities to persuade even the slickest of urbanites to give a little back to the planet.

Save the Manatee

Interested in saving an endangered species? The Save the Manatee Club puts student volunteers on the front lines, manning tables at events and festivals and campaigning from its offices in Florida. By signing up for the newsletter on the website, you'll get updates on when, where and how you can chip in. The small non-profit also provides at-home work for volunteers who want to continue to help out throughout the year, and you can even adopt your own manatee through the web site (don't worry, no feeding responsibilities required).

Volunteer Outdoor Colorado

For something far more physically challenging, Volunteer Outdoor Colorado offers a variety of projects to accommodate every time commitment and level of expertise. From constructing paths to planting trees and helping sustain ecological habitats, VOC will give you a great excuse to get your hands dirty and instant gratification after a hard day's labor. In the Rockies, you'll score an unparalleled view of one of nature's grandest skylines, and if conditions permit, you may still be able to hit the ski slopes when you're not saving the world.

Nature Conservancy

If you want to stay close to home, the Nature Conservancy can connect you with volunteer efforts in any state. The group has been working since 1951 to protect and improve various habitats from California to Maine, and its vast Volunteer Stewardship Network includes dozens of initiatives in Chicago and the suburbs. These include workdays with local park districts, during which volunteers help weed out invasive plant species, clear trails and help with animal rescue efforts. And if you plan to strike out abroad someday, the Nature Conservancy offers opportunities in countries all over the globe.

Living Lands and Waters

This organization is dedicated to cleaning up the Midwest's rivers through group volunteer efforts. Volunteers for LLW can organize their own outings or join already scheduled efforts to help with river clean-up and tree planting. The group has worked with more than 60,000 able-bodied volunteers since it began, but founder Chad Pregracke says its greatest achievement is "being able to see—in a lot of different areas—a transformation." The group offers alternative spring break opportunities each year, but Pregracke says LLW has been so successful that it is becoming increasingly hard to find waterways that need rescuing. ♦♦♦

ROAMIN' HOLIDAY

Get off that double-decker tour bus and work your way around the globe.

By Joseph Hernandez
Illustration by Tim Young

THERE ARE SEEMINGLY few options for seeing the world as a 20-something traveler. Crippled by a barebones bank account and an almost insatiable wanderlust, those wanting to stroll the Seine or climb the Pyrenees have little room to scratch their worldly itch. Luckily, with a little research, there is a host of opportunities for creative and curious travelers who are more interested in living like locals than being tourists.

HEAVE A HOE

Through WorldWide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOFing, for short), a \$15 annual membership scores you access to an exclusive network of farms throughout Europe and Asia. By contacting the farms that interest you—from animal husbandry to viticulture (wine grape-growing)—WWOOFing gives you an opportunity to experience sustainable and organic living firsthand. WWOOFers are responsible for their airfare, but upon arriving at their destination farm, they enjoy free meals, room-and-board, language immersion and abundant opportunities to socialize. While working on a fig farm on the coast of Greece, 25-year-old Steven Oengel says he “rode horses on the beach, got fat on figs and became an adherent to the organic lifestyle.” Most European countries do not require a visa if you stay for less than 90 days, but other countries, particularly in Asia, have different visa requirements so be sure to research before booking your trip.



CHIT-CHAT

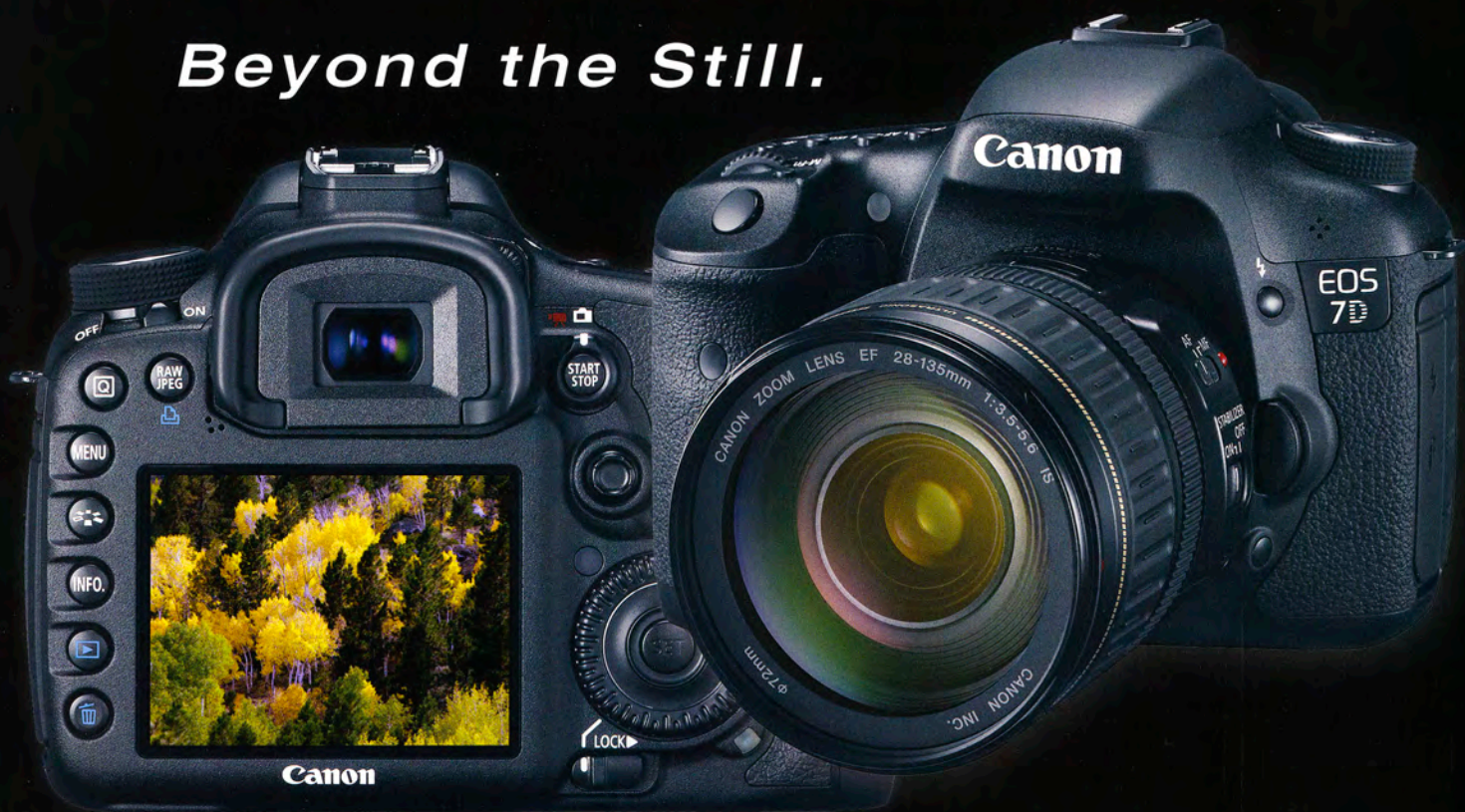
If a three-month commitment on a farm isn't for you, Pueblo Ingles in Spain is the perfect pit-stop—or launch-pad—for any European vacation. Situated only 30 minutes from Madrid, Pueblo Ingles (or, “English Village”) hires English-speaking volunteers to converse with Spanish speakers seeking to improve their English. “Participants engage in a big talk-a-thon,” says Brian Bolles, program manager for Pueblo Ingles. For eight days, volunteers chat with Spaniards while receiving free lodging and meals. Think day camp for adults: one-on-one conversations, improv, small group theater and “jokes around the village bar” are all on the schedule, says Bolles. “At the beginning, everyone is shy and reserved, but by the end there's an understanding and bond that wouldn't happen from reading a book about Spaniards or Americans.”

BE A STUDY BUDDY

The SATs may be behind you, but they loom heavily on the minds of many ambitious South Koreans looking to attend American universities. In cities throughout Korea, hagwons, the Korean language equivalent of SAT prep school, hire hundreds of Americans year-round to tutor students. Many of these schools are more than willing to sponsor American teachers—even the untrained—by paying for visas, airfare, housing and even a wage. Be warned: some teachers have reported working upwards of 60 hours a week, with little to no personal time. Conversely, coming back from your Korean summer with \$15,000 extra in the bank isn't half bad. ...

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Photo of Keith Gallagher in *Shining City* by Peter Wynn Thompson

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THE UN-RESTAURANT

Underground dining clubs offer delectably lavish fare to a handful of in-the-know gourmands.

By Joseph Hernandez • Photos by Matt Austin

WALK INTO THE ROOM, and it's just another Logan Square apartment: warm and cozy, with a red couch, art dotting the walls and the plastered arches found in almost every Chicago pre-war flat. The lights are dim; the room to the left, in what normally functions as the living room, is aglow with candlelight. Two dining tables—one with six place settings, the other with four—are covered in a maroon tablecloth and black runner, with a collection of wildflowers as the centerpiece. Upon entering, a cocktail is placed in your hand as you are introduced to your dining partners for the evening.

Welcome to the Rabbit Hole.

An addition to Chicago's underground restaurant scene, the Rabbit Hole is a mere 10 weeks old as of this writing. But unlike others that bear the "underground" label, Rabbit Hole is underground in the truest sense. Unlicensed, regularly held in roaming locations (apartments, galleries and other private spaces) and access granted by invitation only (friends of friends of friends), the Rabbit Hole is a restaurant that requires a lot of trust—and discretion—on the part of guests, host and chef.

"The Cheshire Chef and I like to think that we're all in it together," says the Queen of Tarts, hostess of the Rabbit Hole's dinners, using an alias and speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of Health Department reprisal. "It's about the experience, the cuisine and the conversations started about the food."

A CULINARY CITY of the first order, Chicago is host to the giants of American cuisine. Claiming the likes of Charlie Trotter (Charlie Trotter's), Grant Achatz (Alinea), Homaro Cantu (Moto), Rick Bayless (Frontera Grill) and Top Chef alum Stephanie Izard (soon-to-open Drunken Goat) and Dale Levitski (Sprout), the city has abundant talent. The Queen and the Chef spring out of this tradition. "We've worked in those restaurants; we've followed other people's orders; we've done the grind," says the Chef, taking sips from a Shoulder Season cocktail at the Whistler, a bar in Logan Square. "We started [The Rabbit Hole] because the time was right. This is more for us than anything else."



Samon ceviche

That sort of maverick sensibility pervades this grassroots culinary movement, which sprung up over the last decade, establishing outposts in all the major cities and many of the smaller ones like Austin and Des Moines. Operating sans health code and vendor and operating licenses, these unsanctioned and unregulated pop-up restaurants are common on the West Coast, considered the birthplace of the movement, and in New York, traditionally home to avant garde ideas (most opera-



The Cheshire Chef prepares the veal cheek.

tors—including the Rabbit Hole owners—have basic sanitation training, a prerequisite for working in restaurants).

The movement in Chicago is no less vibrant but is not all that underground in that a number of operators hold licenses, which allow them to provide dining experiences without breaking the law. Bill Dugan, owner of seafood market Fish Guy on the Northwest Side, is one such entrepreneur, operating his dining club Wellfleet one night a week for 12 lucky diners able to afford the \$100 tab. Dugan is not a fan of unlicensed ventures. "Who wants to eat somewhere that has questionable sanitation?" says Dugan in a phone interview. "I've been to underground restaurants and the concept is cool, yeah, but execution is never going to be on par with a place like Trotter's."

Dugan was inspired to open Wellfleet after reading a New York Times article detailing similar "occasional" restaurants in Paris—restaurants that focused on the culture of eating and the cuisine. "I took the idea and decided to run with it, but my way," says Dugan. Utilizing the seafood that he supplies to the city's best restaurants and drawing inspiration from his childhood town in Cape Cod with which the restaurant shares a name, he took the plunge—so to speak—in mid-October.

A similar sense of romance and adventure attracts many foodies to the underground scene, who typically learn about events through word-of-mouth, which is the case with the Rabbit Hole. "[At traditional restaurants] the chef is often hyped and overexposed, and the food gets lost in the background," says Jason Stelmick, a line-cook for Kuma's Corner and repeat guest to the

Rabbit Hole. "I like the surprise, the randomness of the strangers you meet and food you would never order in a traditional restaurant."

It's easy to assume that the underground movement has been spurred by the recession, which makes opening any sort of small business a dicey proposition at best. Yet, a number of underground chefs appear to have little to no interest in opening their own restaurants. Even Dugan, with his licensing and connections with not only seafood sources but other restaurateurs, is unwilling to set-up shop. "I'm already at [Fish Guy] 60 hours a week, and that's not counting the time I spend working with my chefs on the menu and execution of that week's dinner," says Dugan. "I don't want to be a restaurateur, hell no."

The Queen and Chef share the same view. "We're living in the moment. Part of that moment is just seeing how far we can take this thing," says the Chef. The Queen agrees. "We don't even have servers. It's just the two of us, one in the kitchen, one front of house," she says. "As soon as we start thinking about expanding, that's when we get a host of problems, like staff and overexposure."

It is these and a myriad of other problems that come with the territory of owning a restaurant, something that "is not worth it," says Jeremy Townsend, who founded Ghetto Gourmet dining club in 2004 in Oakland, Calif. "These [dinners] are punk-rock and revolutionary, something different that is incredibly difficult to maintain in a traditional restaurant setting." Townsend should know: After years of traveling and hosting the Ghetto Gourmet around the country, he describes himself as "burnt out" but still

proud of the movement. The risks run by an underground dinner pale in comparison to those of restaurants. "What if you don't get people to fill your dining room that night? That shit is fucking hard," says Townsend. Instead, he sees the unique business model of these dinners as "that rare entrepreneurial opportunity where demand far exceeds supply."

And that is what the Queen and Chef hope for. "It's better for everyone involved if they open themselves up to new people, flavors, textures and experiences," says the Chef.

Maybe that's why they try to pull out all the stops for their five-course dinners for which they request a "donation" of \$85. Sourcing for the menu is done weeks in advance, as the duo scours farmer's markets and co-ops for a majority of their ingredients. The Chef says she doesn't plan the menu, instead letting inspiration come to her as she thinks about the nature of each ingredient working in tandem.

At the November event, the menu consisted of a subtle parsnip purée with black truffle oil and blue cheese; salmon ceviche with fennel, chestnuts and smooth persimmon slices; lemon-oil preserved anchovy served atop a hearty, earthy wild mushroom (crimini, porcini, portabella) risotto gallette; exotic veal cheek alongside horseradish creme fraiche and a bed of waterchestnut sprouts; and a chocolate pot-de-creme, topped with handmade vanilla bean marshmallows and pecan brittle. Each course was paired with a different wine that brought together the dish and its component flavors. Oohs and ahs greeted each course, followed by discussion of each dish presented.

It was a heady experience for first-time underground dinner guest and foodie neophyte Alyse Martinez. "I would never have thought to order things like this before," says Martinez, looking at the menu, printed on a short gold-tinted



A table setting at The Rabbit Hole

cardstock. "I don't typically try new things but with a menu made for you, you just go with it."

And this, says the Queen, is exactly the point. "Like *Alice in Wonderland*, guests should just fall down the hole, follow the rabbit, trust the process. We won't lead you astray."

After the sinfully lavish meal, Martinez expressed a newfound appreciation for haute cuisine. "Before, I thought food people were snobby. After tonight, I understand why [underground dinners] are important. I also met people I wouldn't talk to normally, and we talked about food. You don't do that at restaurants." Martinez noted that the price tag was daunting, considering the menu was something completely unknown to her, but "better this than a chain restaurant," says Martinez.

As dinner came to a close, the Queen and Chef made their way out of the secluded kitchen, accepting the light applause of ten sated guests. The Chef adjusted the purple bandana on her head and took a bow, grabbing a glass of one of the evening's wines on the way up. Later that evening, with dishes piled high in the sink, the two were already discussing their theme for the next event. "We're thinking chocolate," says a weary Queen.

Consider this my RSVP. •••

JOIN THE CLUB

While invitations to some underground dining clubs are by referral only, here are three nomadic Chicago restaurants that solicit guests. —JH

CLANDESTINO

Blink and you might miss this one. Chef Efrain Cuevas, formerly of the Ghetto Gourmet, hosts an event he dubs a "collaborative": BYOB, casual-yet-still-fine-dining experience alongside artists and performers in art spaces throughout the city.

Cost: \$20-\$100, varies by event.

RSVP: Follow @chEfrain on Twitter, friend Clandestino Supper Club on Facebook or sign up for the mailing list on the website, clandestinodining.org

CITY PROVISIONS SUPPER CLUB

Cleetus Friedman, owner of Ravenswood-catering company City Provisions, hosts dinners at local farms during the growing season and supper clubs around town the rest of the year. Seasonal and local food from area farmers is his specialty.

Cost: \$75 (includes drinks, tax, gratuity and entertainment).

RSVP: Call 773.293.2489 or email supperclub@cityprovisions.com, cityprovisions.com

SINHÁ

If Carmen Miranda catered a recurring Sunday brunch, you'd have Sinhá, a colorful Brazilian-influenced affair hosted by Jorgina Pereira in her West Loop home.

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THREE LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO CHICAGO'S FOOD DESERT PROBLEM



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THERE'S SOMETHING PROFOUND about the simple act of cooking. A cup of this, a teaspoon of that, season to taste, and you have an original creation that is not only cheaper and healthier than eating at a drive-in, but also nourishing to the soul.

Unfortunately, in some of Chicago's neighborhoods the most basic ingredients for cooking are hard to come by. In 2006, researcher Mari Gallagher, in association with LaSalle Bank, released a report showing that 630,000 Chicagoans live in food deserts—neighborhoods with a limited number of accessible grocery stores but a heavy concentration of fast food restaurants and convenience stores. Gallagher updated her report in June 2009 and found slight progress: Some 600,000 Chicagoans still live in food deserts.

Most are located in the city's southern and western neighborhoods, including Woodlawn, Englewood, West Englewood, Roseland, Bronzeville and Washington Park. Gallagher's report found that the lack of access to fresh fruit and vegetables is a serious health problem, increasing the risk of obesity, diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. What's more, in areas where grocery stores are sparse, and a McDonald's is on every corner, many people wouldn't know how to prepare nutritious food even if they had access to it.

Reaching the point where every Chicagoan has access to fresh produce and meat requires government support, local economic development, grocery store recruitment and—perhaps most importantly—community education. Many food desert areas in Chicago have already started their own community-based initiatives to solve the problem. Emphasizing local food production and distribution, these are grassroots solutions in the truest sense of the word.

By Margaret Smith
Illustrations by
Adam Hanson



URBAN FARM

TAKE A LOOK around a disadvantaged community, and there's one thing you'll always see: vacant lots. What if you could take those lots, an outward sign of an area's emptiness and squalor, and grow something?

Urban farms do just that. They take vacant lots, as well as rooftops and unused land in housing projects and park districts, and cultivate them to grow fruits and vegetables. People learn how to grow and care for the food they eat, making the connection to their food much more personal.

But seeing a crop through to harvest requires a serious time commitment. Urban farmers have to outwit the elements, compensate for depleted or contaminated soil and prepare for the possibility that their vacant lot may be bulldozed for construction. Greenhouses may have to be built to protect crops in wintertime. Like all potential food desert solutions, urban farming can be complicated, often taking years to execute.

But those years spent developing a farm are years that are added to the life of a community, say the people at Growing Home, a non-profit organization started in 1992 to provide job training through organic agriculture to homeless or low-income individuals.

The organization, an offshoot of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, was brought into Englewood by the community to help solve both problems. The land they own in the area, two-thirds of an acre on the corner of Ashland and 58th St., was sold to them for only a dollar, and Wood Street Farm was born. At the time, the neighborhood of 75,000 people had only one grocery store. (Even today there are only two.) Wood Street Farm has been successful in feeding members of the immediate community and surrounding areas. Growing Home also runs two other farms in the Chicago area, including one in Marseilles, Ill., a southwest suburb of the city, and another on the corner of 51st St. and Laflin St.

According to Rebekah Silverman, Growing Home's director of resource development, the organization is dedicated to the idea that the experience of growing things can be so powerful that it can transform both individuals and communities. Growing food almost exclusively in "hoophouses" (unheated greenhouses), Growing Home is now the city's only permanent, year-round organic farm. "City dwellers need green spaces," Silverman says. "It feels good to be in a space where stuff is growing."



*A combination of community activism and private enterprise got Milwaukee-based chain **ROUNDY'S SUPERMARKET** to sign a lease this past March on a 60,000 square foot supermarket on 39th and State in Bronzeville. The store is scheduled to open in fall 2010.*

IF PEOPLE DON'T have access to healthy food, why not bring it closer to them? That's the premise behind community-supported agriculture, or CSA. The idea is simple: An individual farm or a group of them enrolls customers who agree to pay a set fee. The fee goes directly to the farm to support its operation, and then the farm delivers boxes of produce to distribution centers for pick-up by CSA members.

To make this work, the farms or organizers have to be able to transport perishables from as far away as Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin. And this can be a problem because some grassroots CSAs may not have the refrigerated trucks necessary to accomplish the task.

That's the predicament that Chitown CSA—the only Chicago CSA created to serve food deserts in the city—finds itself in. It has just finished its inaugural year, which founder and organizer Ricky Montgomery says was a successful one, even though it lacked a refrigerated truck. It recently received a truck as a donation from a member and now is seeking funds to repair it—a step that's critical to its success next year.

Montgomery, who launched this operation in summer

FOOD FOR LESS, a branch of the Ralphs Grocery Store chain, opened in West Englewood in 2006. According to research analyst Mari Gallagher, the store serves roughly 40,000 people scattered over 307 city blocks.

GROWING POWER, a Milwaukee-based urban farm and youth training program, has three different locations in Chicago, found in Cúbrini Green, Jackson Park and Grant Park.



FARMERS MARKET

FOR AFFLUENT CHICAGOANS, farmers markets are a path to the freshest ingredients rather than the most inexpensive ones. Buying organic comes at a steep price, and they don't mind it. Wandering amid the homemade jellies and fresh flowers, shoppers find it an entertaining way to spend a morning or afternoon.

Food desert residents, however, look to these markets to fulfill basic needs but can't afford to pay top dollar. Thus, the challenge is creating a market for the market—making sure local residents can afford to support them while assuring farmers a fair price.

According to Dennis Ryan, former market manager at the ubiquitous Green City Market and current manager at the 61st Street Farmer's Market in Woodlawn, farms don't work like other businesses do. To make a market work, it's crucial to build trust between the farmer and the market, and this can be hard for start-up markets to do.

Ryan and the volunteers at the 61st Street Market off of Blackstone Ave. are experts on the subject. Sitting on the edge of affluent Hyde Park, home of the University of Chicago, and Woodlawn, a neighborhood that's more than 95 percent African-American with more than half its population on public aid, the market attracts a diverse clientele.

Besides providing healthy food to Woodlawn residents, the market seeks to support sustainable and organic agriculture (especially from minority farmers) and educate the community to rebuild the neighborhood's food culture. Ryan has created nutrition classes on-site and at local schools to teach residents the value of fresh food.

To make food affordable, the market accepts public food stamps via the LINK program. Those dollars go farther than they ordinarily would because the market receives a subsidy that allows it to double LINK dollars up to \$25 per visit. The market is the first organization in Illinois and the second in the Midwest to do so.

Ryan says the market's benefits are endless. Apart from filling the crucial need of supplying fresh food, it's a place for neighbors and families to interact and see where their food is coming from. "There are longer conversations [at a farmers market]," Ryan says. "People talk. They talk to the farmers, and they talk to each other. It's where your neighbors are coming together, and I think it does help build a community."

CSA

2009, says it did quite well in its first year of operation, serving 30 members along with several senior citizen centers in CSA-targeted, predominantly African American neighborhoods. Montgomery's objective for the first year was to enroll what he called the "African American elite" from the community to create an economic base for the organization. Next year, the hope is that the CSA will be able to go deeper in the community and bring fresh food to those who need it the most.

Entrepreneurism rather than government aid or intervention offers the greatest hope for food deserts, says Montgomery, adding: "You can bring more competitors in, keep prices low and also help empower some folks in the community or outside the community."





By Veronica Libman
Photos by Tim Seltzer
and Brad Johnson

On a frigid Friday evening, designers, models, editors and photographers gathered around an immense, vacant pit in a dark corner of Fulton Market. Our task was to provide a showcase for the designs of three 2009 Columbia College Chicago grads whose work has not yet found a retail home. After a group huddle, the arduous process of setting up began. Lighting, makeup, (big) hair. Action. The hours sped by, and the glare of the lights—street and soft box in tandem—provided an intense contrast to clothes that were soft, silky and feminine. As dawn broke, the future looked bright for these young designers, who stand poised on the brink of greatness. As for now, they take a deep breath and try not to look down.

Art Director Veronica Libman **Photo Director** Cooper Link **Designers** Reginald Ilagan, Alexis Aprati and Maureen Sullivan
Models JamieLee Charapata, Rachel Malec and Liz Labellarte **Makeup** Cindy Delgado **Hair and styling** Veronica Libman



Maureen Sullivan draws her inspiration from German surrealist Hans Bellmer. Here, she uses layers of fabric to mimic the beauty of the human form. The dress is hand-distressed silk with hand-sewn pleating and beading.

Captivated by the ongoing lifecycle of coral and the mysterious beauty of the ocean floor, Alexis Aprati evokes the wonder of that experience in her designs. On this page: a cotton and silk dress with hand-sewn bodice and individually-crafted pleats.





Left: Every stitch in Bloodline, Reginald Ilagan's collection, is both a celebration of his mother's life and confirmation of his belief that blood is the thickest and most elemental material. He combines organic cotton and tulle with a hand-stitched jeweled neckline for added drama. Right: Aprati's silk and wool jacket is reminiscent of coral and works equally well as a dress.

Ilagan's gown is an explosion of cotton, tulle and lace, complete with cotton necklace.





NO PLAN

TB

They're young,
ambitious and creative—
and they refuse to get
discouraged.

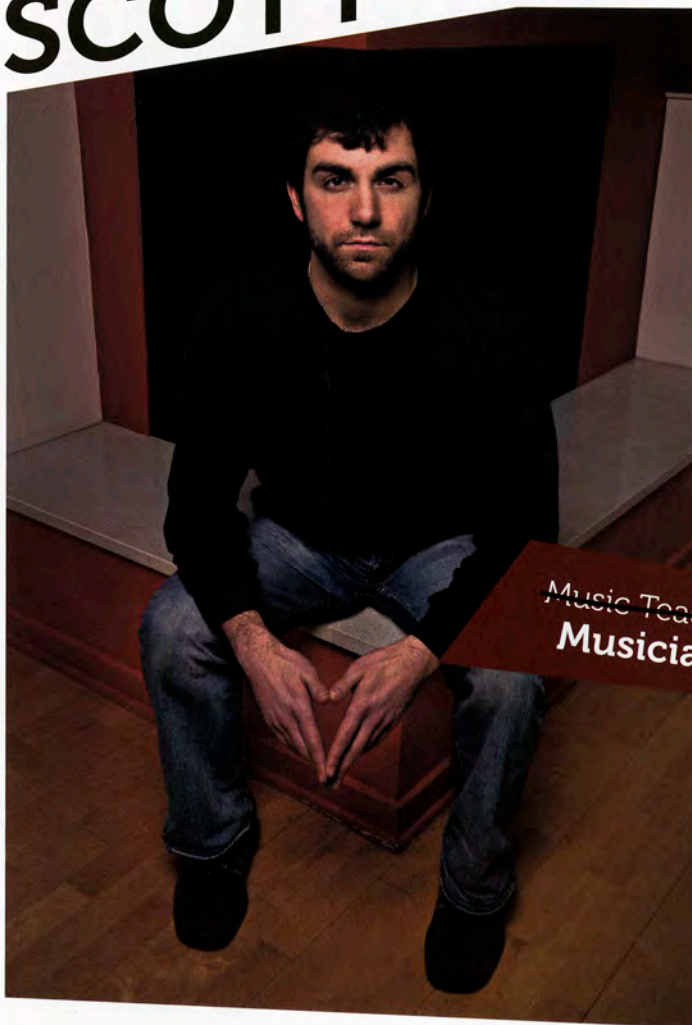
By Travis Truitt
Photos by Thomas Pardee

CREATIVE TYPES OF all professions with big talents and lofty dreams have always flocked to Chicago, the cultural hub of the Midwest. As the nation's third largest city and media market, these artists see the Second City as a place to hone their crafts and—hopefully—establish themselves professionally.

But the harsh realities of the "Great Recession" have made success even more elusive to a rising generation of creatives, who face daunting financial challenges, frustrating day jobs and ferocious competition for the few opportunities that remain. They are often one big break away from success—and one month away from eviction.

Here are the stories of three driven young Chicagoans who refuse to give up on their dreams, and the challenges they face in return.

JARRYD SCOTT



AS I CLIMB a ridiculously long flight of loosely carpeted stairs to interview musician Jarryd Scott at his downtown apartment, my first impression is that this treacherously steep entryway is in no way conducive to the rock-and-roll lifestyle I imagine he lives.

I first met Scott months earlier at a party, and though we discussed music at length that night (our mutual love for the Beatles made us fast allies), he didn't talk much about his own music. Friendly and engaging, with piercing blue eyes, wavy and slightly unkempt brown hair and a day or two's scruff on his face, Scott is not a natural self-promoter. We talk, and I'm able to wring a few facts about his life and career out of him, but it's clear that Scott is more comfortable singing, playing and writing songs than he is talking about himself.

Since graduating from DePaul last spring, Scott, whose birth name is Jarryd Scott Steimer, has been working hard to establish a career in the music industry. In addition to playing with different bands and pursuing a solo career as a singer/songwriter, Scott is teaching private voice and guitar lessons and using his degree in sound recording as an engineer at recording sessions for other bands. His apartment, which he shares with a couple of roommates, is above Third Coast Studios in River North, which are owned and operated by two recent DePaul graduates Scott connected with in school. The location is ideal for Scott, who

finds bands to record in the studio below and then charges for his services.

"That's all I want, just to make a living doing nothing but making music," he

says. "I just don't think about anything other than what I'm singing or playing. I don't think in the past or the future. I'm completely in the present. And that's how I live a lot of my life."

Although Scott has steady income, he has still had to dip into his savings, which are slowly depleting. I ask him if he has a back-up career plan; he says, simply, "No." His client base is likely to expand through networking, but until then Scott is facing the prospect of finding a part-time job—sooner rather than later.

He can handle that, as long as it's just a few hours a week. "For some people it's just a job and doesn't matter," he says. "Doing something outside of music is emotionally and mentally unfulfilling for me. That's why I can't be an accountant. I would just be sad."

There's soul in Scott's presence and in his music. He's optimistic he'll find his place in the music industry, but, like most artists, he sometimes doubts himself. "Who knows, maybe I'll have a shitty job outside of music the rest of my life," he says, unexpectedly. It's a passing moment of panic for this usually serene artist.

MAYA HAUGHTON



Customer Service Agent
Comedienne

AS I WAIT to meet comedienne Maya Haughton in the first floor café of the Michigan Ave. building where she works, I'm prepared for an endless string of one-liners and a display of wacky personalities. Instead, the improv/sketch actress enters the Corner Bakery in full corporate mode. If she were auditioning for the role of the focused young executive, she'd fit the bill.

Haughton, 29, launches into a summary of her accomplishments of the sort she's probably been delivering at auditions since her teens. I tell her to relax—I don't need the full bio. For the first time, she laughs sweetly, and I'm struck by her warmth and a smile that seems to fill the café.

Haughton admits that she was a bit nervous about being interviewed and spent the first half of her workday mulling over answers to potential questions. But with her familiar pre-show jitters now out of the way, she relaxes and tells me just how lucky she is.

She was recently offered a promotion and given full-time status at the e-commerce firm where she works as a customer service agent. For the first time, she feels financially secure. "I'm definitely more stable now than I have been in the last year, but it's still a bit of a struggle," she says.

Haughton also tends bar at Goodman Theatre, and she just finished a run in *Don't Hate the President, Hate the Game*, a weekly sketch show presented by the Second City Outreach and Diversity Program's Brown Co.

Haughton was just 15 when she began acting in a local improv group in her hometown of Tempe, Ariz. Between improv stints in Los Angeles and Boston and studying theater at Loyola University in Chicago, she's worked any day job she could find to sustain herself, including six years as a self-described "Bennigan's

bitch." She's taken risks, bombed on stage, traveled the country and used it all in her craft.

She's had to make sacrifices, too. In 2005, money struggles forced her to cut her yearlong stay with Boston's Improv Asylum in half, and she's had to drop out of college twice because she couldn't scrape together enough money for tuition. Even now, Haughton is still a semester shy of a bachelor's degree.

Though her acting career hasn't been seamless, there have been moments when everything comes together—usually, those moments are realized onstage. "There's nothing better than looking out at the audience and seeing them beaming up at you when you're in character. It's the most exhilarating feeling on the planet," Haughton says, grinning. "It's almost like an electrical surge in energy."

In many ways, her career has only just begun. She wants to venture into stand-up comedy, she says, "and that freaks me the hell out." Though she'd eventually like to open a training center and teach improv to minority students, she's focused on a commercial acting career in Chicago.

"If there was a Saturday Night Live-type show here, that would be great," she says. "Maybe my friends and I can start it."

JOHN LENDMAN

Shoe Salesman
Journalist

THERE IS A SLIGHTLY disconcerting seriousness to John Lendman.

Perhaps it's just a case of too much self-consciousness at one table, as the notion of one journalist interviewing another is a bit awkward at the best of times. But perhaps Lendman's seriousness comes from frustration.

Months after graduation, he continues to look for work—any work—as a journalist. He would rather not be the subject of a story like this—he'd rather be writing it. Lendman would also rather not be selling shoes to pay his bills, but that is his life.

At an early age, he took a big risk to move to Chicago from San Antonio after high school to study journalism. Eventually he was able to pursue a degree at Columbia College Chicago while working full-time as a salesman at a high-end Michigan Avenue shoe store. The job is a double-edged sword: it pays the bills and keeps him financially afloat, but he fears his career detour could become involuntarily permanent. He finds time to contribute weekly stories to local news website Gapers Block, for which he is paid nothing, but the resumes he sends for paid work haven't been fruitful.

Still, Lendman concedes that his day job keeps his people skills sharp, as the only effective salesman is an engaging one. Plus, appealing to strangers to sell shoes takes Lendman a bit out of his comfort zone, much the way asking tough questions of political figures or approaching any stranger for an interview would. But Lendman still isn't fooling himself—he's stalled.

"Every day when I sell shoes I feel like it's just another day I'm not utilizing my degree," says Lendman. "It's my job. I'll be asked to clean something at work or take out the trash or organize products like shoe polish, and I think, 'What am I doing?'"

Lendman's background is impressive. In the months preceding the presidential election, he covered the Iowa caucuses, even interviewing the iconic Elizabeth Edwards, wife of then-presidential candidate John Edwards. He was one of only a handful of college journalists to cover the Joe Biden-Sarah Palin vice presidential debate in St. Louis. Among his internships is an impressive stint at the Chicago Tribune. He has written for school newspapers from middle school through college. Indeed,

one would be hard-pressed to find a journalism graduate with better credentials than Lendman.

His association with Gapers Block gives him access to events in Chicago and an opportunity to write and report and keep his name out there. In doing so, he sacrifices his days off. He has no choice.

"The worry is that I'm going to get rusty," Lendman says, with palpable anxiety. "Writing is a muscle... you have to keep writing on an on-going basis. You have to actively be interviewing

people and doing research and keep coming up with storylines. On my day off, I have to take my laptop to a coffee shop and pound out a story."

Lendman lights up when he speaks about what he loves about newswriting: the moment in every story when he discovers his angle and finds the perfect quote to make the story work. "It's a rush that makes you sweat through your shirt, and your [audio recorder] buttons are slippery, and your hand is shaking as you're writing it down," he says. He misses the rush, and its memory keeps him focused on his goals.

Day after day, Lendman looks for jobs. That search now includes paid internships, something he says would have been unimaginable to him a year ago. He is limiting his job search to Chicago and nowhere else. It's a questionable strategy, as journalists rarely land their first job in a major market, but Lendman says he's committed to finding work here.

He doesn't define himself as a shoe salesman, and he never will, even if that's who he is for 40 hours a week. "I'm really stubborn," he says, and I don't doubt him. "I have no back-up plan."



For more profiles from the post-grad frontlines check out our expanded edition at echomagonline.com

BLACK IS OFFICIALLY BEAUTIFUL

2009 was a watershed year for girls of color.

By Ebony Haynes • Illustration by Cooper Link

THE DISNEY STUDIOS are known for making movies about fairytale princesses and their quest for true love. *Snow White* came first in 1937; then *Cinderella* in 1950 and *Sleeping Beauty* in 1959. These fairy tales resonate with young women everywhere because of their romance, happy endings and heroines' beauty. To a young, impressionable audience, they define femininity.

The Disney movie that most spoke to me was *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)—the story of Belle, a woman so lovely and patient she was able to make the most evil creature fall in love with her and morph into a handsome prince. As a young girl, I aspired to be Belle, just as many five-year-olds still do. Her pretty, pale face covered my school supplies, Halloween costumes, bedroom set and toy chest. To me, she was perfection personified. She was passionate, strong and intelligent—and, best of all, she had the power to make her dreams come true.

But much as I adored Belle, I knew she didn't look like me. At the time, I was unaware that my first image of beauty was that of a white woman. I still felt good about who I was because I was lucky enough to have a mother who told me how beautiful I was every day, but it did teach me about white America's definition of beauty, and "black" didn't exactly qualify.

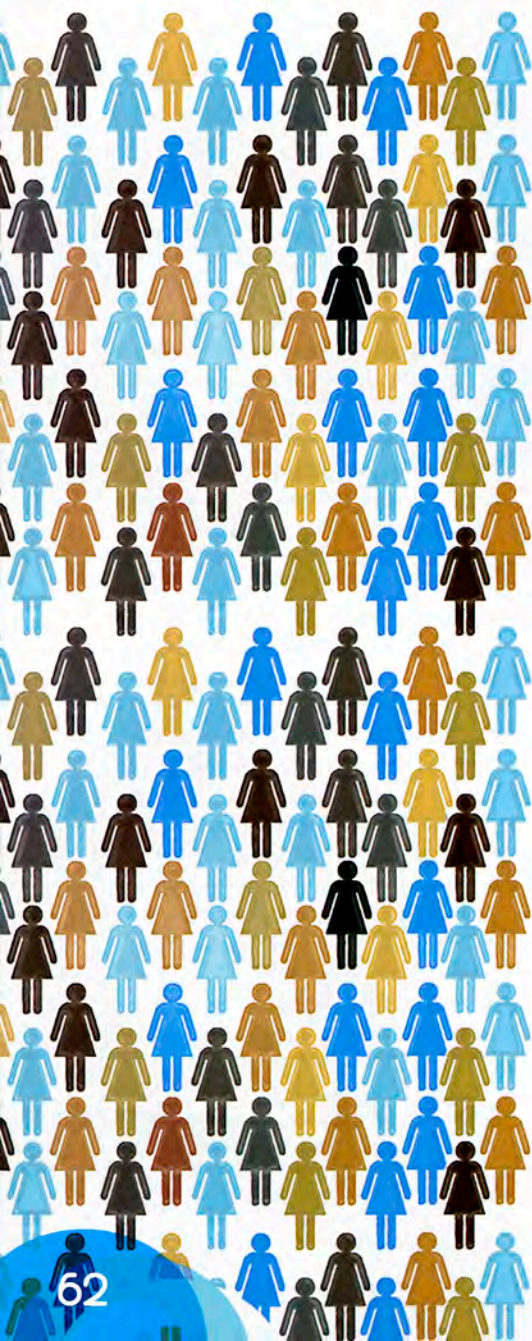
That's why I was overjoyed to learn about about Disney's most recent animation release *The Princess and The Frog*, which debuted in theaters last December. It famously features the first

animated black princess, Tiana, who starts out as a waitress in New Orleans during the Jazz Age and ends up kissing a frog, seeking magic from a voodoo queen and falling in love with a prince named Naveen.

Just like Belle, Tiana is talented, hard working and bright—and more than capable of realizing her lofty dreams.

To some people, this is just another children's movie. But to black women like me, the recognition that we, too, deserve to be princesses is a landmark one. (It's also a landmark for Disney, whose last animated feature with a predominantly black cast was *The Lion King*, in which all the characters were animals.)

Racial stereotypes continue to pervade, and though some may not believe children can perceive this, studies show that they do. An experiment conducted in 1939 by Dr. Kenneth Clark proved that black children struggle to see their blackness as positive. A group of 16 African American children, aged six through nine, were shown two dolls—one white and one black—and asked to pick out the "best" or "nicest" doll and then to pick the doll that "looks most like you." The results were telling; ten children picked the white doll as both the "nicest" doll and the doll they liked best. Clark repeated the experiment over the next few decades, giving it to as many as 300 children. Black children attending segregated schools consistently picked the white doll as the "nice" one. Clark testified about his experiments in the companion case to *Brown v. Board of Education*, citing



the results as a compelling reason for the need for integrated schools.

The issue resurfaced in 2005 when Kiri Davis, a high school student in Harlem, conducted a similar experiment in her short film *A Girl Like Me*. Out of 21 children, 15 said the white doll was the “nice” doll. This shows that after 50 years—and the efforts of the civil rights movement, racial integration in schools and the cultural influence of icons like Martin Luther King, Jr.—some black children still see themselves as outsiders rather than as innately worthy.

Comedian Chris Rock also takes on the issue of black beauty in the 2009 documentary *Good Hair*, which explores the kinds of extreme measures many black women take—from harsh chemical relaxers to expensive weaves and extensions—to achieve the straight, flowy hair that so many women equate with beauty. (My hair is chin-length and relaxed, and people constantly assume that I must be wearing extensions to have such “good hair.”)

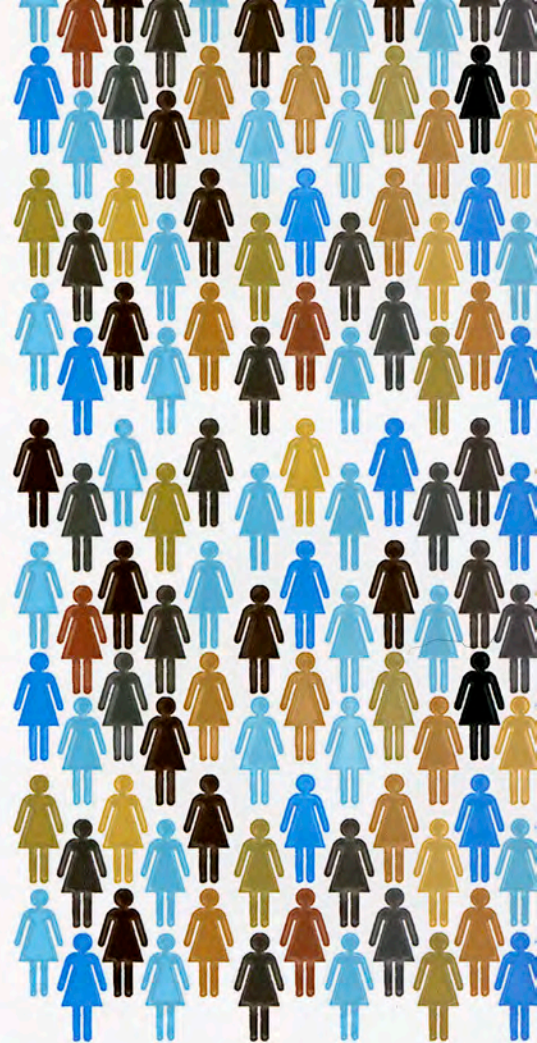
It’s scarcely a coincidence that this attention to black beauty and self-image comes at a time when the stylish and elegant Michelle Obama is the nation’s First Lady, and the first daughters are Sasha and Malia, perhaps the prettiest girls ever to inhabit the White House. 2009 was also the year in which “So in Style”—the first line of Barbie dolls with hair and facial features modeled after black women’s—debuted. And it hasn’t just been this past year that attention has been focused on this topic; the past decade has found black women playing

powerful roles on television and on the big screen. (Who can forget Halle Berry’s moving and historic Oscar acceptance speech in 2002 for *Monster’s Ball*?)

The influence of Michelle Obama has already made itself felt. A 2009 survey by Proctor & Gamble revealed that 90 percent of black women felt that Obama’s image as First Lady will have a positive impact on public perceptions, while 86 percent said Sasha and Malia Obama inspired them to embrace their identities. This is a marked improvement, as a similar report in 2007 showed that almost 70 percent of black women surveyed felt they were negatively influenced by their own images in popular media.

The recognition that we,
too, deserve to be princesses,
is a landmark one.

Maybe one day, black girls won’t hesitate to choose the doll that looks most like them—maybe they’ll just see it as beautiful. For my sake, and that of my nieces, cousins and future daughters, I welcome Princess Tiana into Disney’s family and my own. Like the princesses who were finally released from an evil spell, we’re no longer stuck in a white Barbie world. •••





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“A SENSATION!”

—*TIME Magazine*

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Life outside the box

Being multiracial can be confusing... but for whom?

By Mackenzie Owens

Illustration by Adam Hanson

I HATE WHITE people calling me black about as much as I hate black people calling me white. My mom is of Swedish, Norwegian and German descent, and my dad is of African and Native American descent, and I feel wrong claiming any one race at the exclusion of the rest.

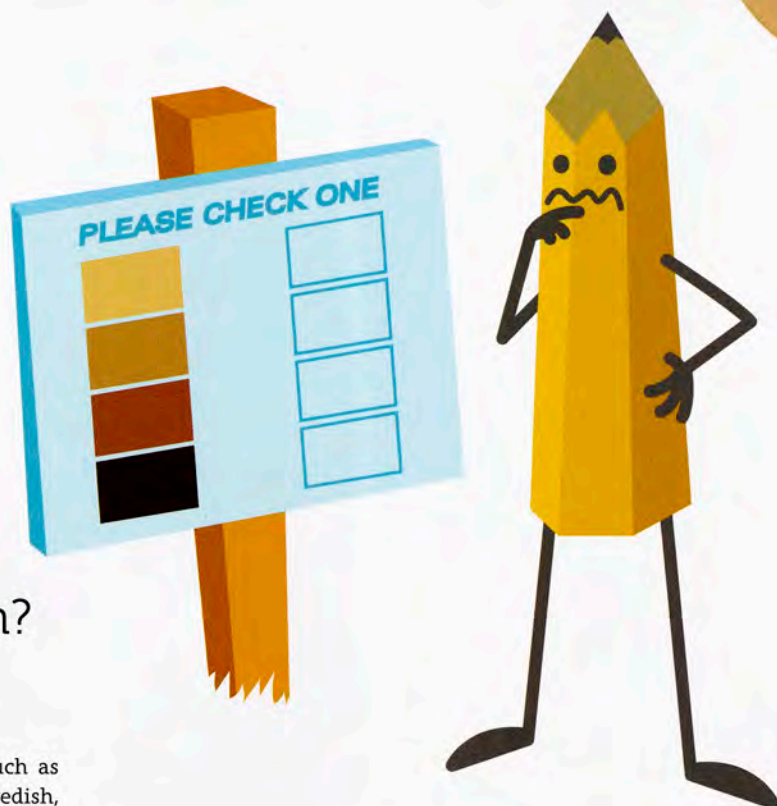
I like who I am. But the fabled “tragic mulatto” myth assumes that multiracial or biracial people are destined to be confused about their identities, culturally homeless, accepted by no one. As a multiracial person, I find this almost laughable. Isn’t it obvious that exposure to different cultures, values, traditions, foods, music and history is more likely to produce well-rounded, open-minded individuals? In my experience, it isn’t multiracial people who are confused about their identities—it’s the allegedly mono-racial masses who are projecting their own confusion onto us.

Gina Samuels, assistant professor at the University of Chicago and board member at MAVIN, the nation’s leading organization promoting the wellness of the multiracial community, agrees with me. “Society doesn’t know what to do with multiracial people; we don’t have a language to talk about it, and the framework that we do have comes from assumptions that are embedded in confusion,” Samuels says.

It is assumed that multiracials don’t have an identity because we’re not seen as being part of a dominant group. But we are part of a group, and it grows larger and more visible every day. With so many multiracial faces at the forefront of the entertainment industry (Alicia Keys and Lenny Kravitz, for starters), and the election of a biracial president who lightheartedly referred to himself as a “mutt” in 2008, Americans are exposed now more than ever to mixed-race faces.

And yet the pressure to identify with a single race persists.

Growing up in Minneapolis, with my mom’s family living on an old farm in Wisconsin and my dad’s family living on the South Side of Chicago, I was exposed to both sides of my heritage and came to find comfort and belonging in both situations. That was invaluable to my self worth.



As kids, we don’t really see skin color but that eventually changes. For me it was in middle school, when it was brutally brought to my attention by my black classmates that I was “light-skinned” and sounded and acted “white.” Whenever my mother came to school it was a nightmare, because my classmates couldn’t fathom the differences in skin color. It was in seventh grade that I first heard the question that would follow me for years: “Are you adopted?”

In high school I succumbed to social pressures and crawled inside the black box. I abandoned my old friends (my elementary school was predominantly white) and did everything I was expected to do, including dropping the “ings” and “ers” off the end of words and wearing FUBU clothes, hair grease and braids. And for a while it worked.

As teens, we all want to fit in with a group, whether it’s with the cool kids, athletic kids, smart kids or, in my case, black kids. Maybe it took growing up immersed mostly in one culture, then diving head first into another, to figure out that I don’t identify as black or white, that I really am the sum of many parts—no more, no less.

And recent research suggests we may even be stronger for our diverse background. A social psychology research team at Stanford University headed by Kevin Binning, PhD., surveyed a group of multiracial high school students, finding that they reported equal if not higher levels of well-being, compared to their monoracial peers. Binning theorizes that “perhaps being able to ‘stand one’s ground’ and reject social pressure to identify with a single racial group indicates resiliency.”

Before we tell our multiracial children to start sacrificing whole chunks of their heritage, we should give them the gift of developing their own identity, of choosing who they want to be—even if we don’t really understand it. •••

THE
CURIOUS
CASE OF

Chicago's Ghost Cops

RON FABIANI DOESN'T smoke his stogie, he just kinda chews it. And often.

Even when one of his signature cigars isn't hanging rakishly between his lips, the 45-year-old Chicagoland cop isn't tough to identify. Round face, leather coat and matching golf hat, light mustache. A guy's guy. His words, though drenched in a telltale Chicago accent, cut sharply to the point. His steely hazel eyes make it clear that he takes himself seriously (but not too seriously), and that others should, too.

He agrees to meet me at a restaurant in suburban Schiller Park called The Great Escape. The place is named after its owners, the Great brothers, who bought it in 1992 without a clue about its shadowy and peculiar past. Today, though it looks like many other restaurants and stores that line Irving Park Rd., both the Greats and Fabiani know firsthand that it's also home to the certifiably unexplainable.

We're here for a reason.



One local group of off-duty policemen just wanted to separate paranormal fact from folklore—now they're soon-to-be reality stars and the newest additions to TV's ghost-busting bandwagon.

By Thomas Pardee

Seated at a white-clothed table, we're joined by Brian Jones, 35, and Pete Schlelich, 39. Jones is young-looking, thin and quiet, with dark hair. Schlelich is tall and subdued, with the rocky frame and cautious face of a classic movie cop. All three men are members of the Chicago Paranormal Detectives, a group of seven local cops and specialists that investigates cases of alleged paranormal activity in and around the city. The group, which Fabiani—or "Fabs," as the group calls him—originally founded in 2003, is made up of four investigators (all working Chicagoland police officers with various specialties), two investigative assistants and a medium. It's also the subject of a new A&E reality show, *Paranormal Cops*, which is set to air beginning Jan. 19.

They're not on assignment tonight—in fact, it's been weeks since they convened for a case. Despite what their upcoming show might suggest, the group has no headquarters, no mobile command station, no proton packs or brown jumpsuits. The way they put it, they're just normal Midwestern guys with day jobs and a penchant for dark occupational humor. But they hope their no-frills, just-the-facts-ma'am approach to paranormal investigating will bring some much-needed credibility to the ghost-hunting game.

"Everywhere we go [as cops], we apply band-aids to everyone's problems, and we can fix anything," Fabiani says, his cigar now stowed between his fingers. "So when we see things we can't explain—things we can't fix—what now? Who do we call? There's no alternative to the police."

Now, thanks to Fabiani and Co., there doesn't need to be.

LOCAL COLOR

The building housing the Great Escape was built in 1889, and the Great brothers are proud of its history, which is on display in pictures lining the front-door

hallway. In the early days, it was Fred Kolze's General Store, complete with a water tower, hitching post and wooden sidewalk, and it was used for a few silent Western movies at the turn of the 20th century. Years later, it was a bar called "The Summerfield," and during prohibition it played host to dirty liquor dealings between mobsters Al Capone and Roger Touhy, before Capone famously tried to muscle in on Touhy's territory.

After the bartender reported his ghost sighting, he found the Detectives' website and contacted Fabiani. The Detectives' policy is to conduct preliminary interviews and investigations, perform background checks and screen for environmental variables that could explain the phenomena. Once they authenticate the claim that there is actual unexplainable activity, they call in the team.

When we see things we can't explain—things we can't fix—who do we call? —Ron Fabiani

For as long as the Greats have owned the place, it's been clear there is something different about it. But it wasn't until a young bartender noticed a man with black, slicked-back hair and a suit descend the back stairs to the basement and seemingly disappear that the long-running suspicion that the building was haunted was openly acknowledged.

"If I'm by myself, I'll shake my keys or announce myself before I come in," says Brian Great, as he walks down the very same stairs the alleged ghost used to flee from sight. "I just don't want to be freaked out if I'm alone."

The basement looks like any other, with exposed pipes and crates of Diet Coke stacked against the back wall. A thunderstorm is raging outside, making the air down here sticky sweet and unevenly chilly.

"Legend has it Capone did some gambling down here," Great says proudly, gesturing around the dank storage room. He points to the door to a closet a few steps away. "We had a few clairvoyants down here last week, and when we took a picture together, my face just ...disappeared."

INTELLIGENT INTERACTION

The Detectives work under the darkness of night. Not because it's creepier or because it makes better TV, but because they believe it is more conducive to paranormal interaction. Night allows them greater control over the environment because of fewer people and less traffic. "Plus, we're not really sure we know who is more afraid of [whom]," says Jones.

They rely on each other heavily. Along with officers Austin Weinstock, 34, and Tom Froelich, 45, Fabiani is a lead investigator. Jones captures on-site audio and video recordings and monitors them for EVP (electronic voice phenomena) occurrences, and Froelich analyzes them in-depth later. Schlelich captures thermal images on video, and his footage is analyzed by Scot Ziarkos, an expert videographer, who's also part of the team.

But before they even begin searching for paranormal activity, they call on medium Moriah Rhame, 40, who can often guide the investigation in a direction otherwise impossible to predict.

Rhame is given no information about the locations prior to her visits, no details about the case the Detectives are working. Her part is simply to show up, listen and light the way.

"It sounds terrible, but they use me, just like they would use an infrared camera, or an EMF detector," says Rhame, who travels from her home in Galena, Ill. for each case. "I see, I hear, I feel, I smell... I'm like a cosmic radio; I just tune into the right frequency."

Though the Detectives set much store in Rhame's guidance, it is the least scientific of all their methods, and they're compelled to treat it accordingly. "We can't rely on her 100 percent, but sometimes she provides answers we can't," Froelich says. "She's been accurate in almost everything she's done with us."

Rhame says her impressions are sometimes images of faces, sometimes the raw emotions or memories of others. When she visited the Great Escape, she said she had "seen" a group of people playing cards in the corner of the basement, and she sensed money had been lost. At the time, she knew nothing of the Great Escape's Capone poker legends, she says.

"Sometimes, I didn't even know how much I got right until I saw the finished episodes," she says.

Fabiani stresses that the professional methods and procedures the Detectives employ is what makes them not only unique, but singularly credible among their ghost-hunting peers on TV.

"We're not mechanics and plumbers and cab drivers; we're policemen who conduct actual investigations," he says. "If [Jones] can't find it, record it or document it anywhere, it didn't happen—I don't give a shit what you felt."

Jones also acts as a research assistant, delving into the backgrounds of potential clients in search of red flags (like criminal records or evidence of psychological

illness), as well as the histories of each location. The Detectives never charge for their services and are very selective about the cases they take.

The Great Escape case came to their attention when Fabiani learned from Ron Great that a human femur was rumored to have been unearthed during the banquet hall's 2002 renovation and later lost. "If there was a bone, it could have been a cow bone, I don't know," Fabiani says. "But we have to separate fact from folklore."

I try and rationalize it, but I don't know what it was. I don't know what I saw.

—Pete Schlelich

At the Great Escape, one corner of the pink wallpapered banquet hall seemed especially active, according to both Rhame and the readings on the electromagnetic frequency (EMF) meter, which supposedly fluctuates whenever spirits are in the room.

"We'll ask, 'How many people are here? Make this thing blink for how many,' and the EMF detector blinked [once for each of us]," Schlelich said. The Detectives call this phenomena "intelligent interaction" and use it to determine whether a place has "extremely conclusive" evidence of paranormal activity.

Based on their investigation, they declared the Great Escape to be certifiably haunted at the end of the night. For Brian Great, that determination has allowed him to make a wary peace with his cohabitants, whoever they are.

"They don't bother me, I don't bother them," he says, climbing the creaky stairs. "I've been told whatever is here isn't dangerous, but I'll err on the side of caution."

BELIEVERS

According to the Detectives, the world is made up of three types of people.

The first are "true believers," who readily accept allegations of paranormal phenomena as fact, sometimes even at the expense of logical explanations. (That thumping sound could just be an upstairs neighbor, but it's more likely your late grandmother's spirit pattering around in her walker.) The second group is made up of "true skeptics," whose understanding of what is logical and

possible can't be shaken, even at the sight of an apparition or the impossible accuracy of a medium's words.

Then, making up what the Detectives guess is 95 percent of people, there are "concealed believers," Schlelich says. And that's where things get interesting. "If they're sitting around in a group, they don't believe at all. But as soon as the group breaks up, they're saying, 'When I was eight years old, I saw Ichabod Crane. What does that mean?'" Fabiani says. "Almost everybody has at least one ghost story."

That includes the skeptics. Schlelich says, despite identifying as a staunch non-believer, he's seen things that have shaken his doubt (particularly during the Detectives' investigation of an abandoned college that will appear in *Paranormal Cops*). Schlelich won't discuss what happened that night, except to say that it "really messed with me."

"I try and rationalize it, but ultimately, I don't know what it was. I don't know what I saw," he says.



Production on the Chicago Paranormal Detectives's new reality show Paranormal Cops includes a mobile communications van (seen here), but the group doesn't use one on its usual investigations.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Creating a TV show about the Detectives' cases wasn't part of the group's starting plan, but it developed as Fabiani welcomed Froelich, Jones and Ziarko onto his team in early 2008.

Froelich was looking to put a show together about ghost-hunting cops (he was a fan of paranormal TV shows), and a quick Google search showed Fabiani's was ready-made and operational, and even local.

"It was meant to be," says Froelich, a 20-year veteran police detective. He contacted Fabiani to discuss a partnership and was soon invited into the fold. "Everything we've done together from that day forward has been with very few bumps in the road."

Though it seemed like a natural marriage, some of the members were wary of jeopardizing their reputations by publicly dabbling in such controversial notions. "I can't walk into a courtroom and get torn apart because they think what I'm doing on some TV show is hinky, and that it's affecting my work as a policeman," Schlelich says.

In June 2008, the Detectives shot and edited a short trailer of footage from one of their investigations to pitch to production companies. By January 2009, after a rumored bidding war between several networks, the Chicago Paranormal Detectives signed with A&E Network Television to produce six 30-minute episodes and an hourlong premiere.

"[In six months] we went from never seriously thinking about a show to having a signed contract," Schlelich says. "And we never even had a pilot."

During the production in early 2009, the Detectives did not deviate from their investigative process. This ensured they remained true to the group's original mission—to help people make emotional sense of the paranormal.

Jones says that's also what makes the Detectives so compelling.

"People like to see the investigator pull out their forensics kits, to see them chart the path of a bullet and check that the evidence matches the story they have," he says. "People like watching cops be cops."

Elaine Frontain Bryant, the executive producer of *Paranormal Cops* for A&E,

says the finished series will add new flavor to the ever-expanding canon of televised paranormal investigations. "We got really lucky—these are real-life characters, and they're naturals," she says. "We're able to be a fly on the wall, to immerse ourselves in the way [the Detectives] conduct their investigations. It bears all the hallmarks of a successful show."

Though they say they have the full blessing of their respective police departments, the officers are still aware of the delicate balance they're attempting to strike with their extra-curricular endeavors. "We put our careers on the line every time we do this," Fabiani says. "Absolutely nobody else [in paranormal investigating] does that."

The group is still investigating and has no plans to stop, regardless of potential TV success. For Fabiani, it started as a service. Rhame says it will stay that way.

"They are sincerely in this to help people heal," she says. "It's not about ego, it's not about fame or fortune—it's about finding truth, finding peace. I can feel it." •••

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NEW WAVE COFFEE gets its name from the musical revolution of three decades ago that launched punk, funk, electronic, ska and glam rock. But this Logan Square coffeehouse has little in common with the rowdy mosh pits of yesterday. A hub of neighborhood activity, it offers sanctuary to local artists, students, writers and young professionals. And it's always busy—even on a late Sunday night.

By Margaret Smith
Photo by Brad Johnson

Newly arrived from Sacramento, this couple frequents New Wave because it reminds them of their favorite coffee shop back home. Are they ready for their first Chicago winter? "Yeah?"

BRADEN NESIN, 22 AND TIA SHELLEY, 21, LOGAN SQUARE

Bold, a New Wave first-timer, has come tonight for the free wireless Internet, which she needs for job-hunting. Her objective: to make enough money so she can move back home to Mongolia. "Looking for anything, anything I can get—retail, anything. It's tough."

TIMON BOLD, 27, LOGAN SQUARE

EMILY SWEENEY, 32, LOGAN SQUARE

Sweeney, a New Wave newbie, is having coffee with Balsoey and contemplating her next job: decorating cakes and cookies at Dinkel's Bakery in Lakeview. "I want to be able to create beautiful things for a living. So if I can do that in my job, I'd love that."

KATE BALSOEY, 30, LOGAN SQUARE

A grant writer for the Erie Family Health Center in Wicker Park, Balsoey is visiting with Sweeney. "I really do like my job, but I can see it going into workaholic mode." New goal in life: trying to balance fun and work.

RACHEL LEVIN, 29, ROGERS PARK

Having her weekly bonding session with her identical twin sister (not pictured), Levin is studying at National Louis University's Skokie campus to be a teacher. "My goal is to have my own classroom and just take off."

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